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Mona Lisa.

LEONARDO DA VINCI

BY
EDWARD McCURDY, M.A.



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PREFACE

THE earliest biography of Leonardo, that in the book of Antonio Billi, ends with the words: "His spirit was never at rest, his mind was ever devising new things."

They suggest some of the difficulties attendant upon the attempt to write about him.

He was the most versatile genius of the age of the Renaissance, and the more genius approaches the universal, the less can it be seen save in section.

If Leonardo had never either painted or worked in sculpture, his achievements in the more mechanical arts, his inventions, his projects, and the plans he carried out in canalization and engineering, would have received notice more befitting their magnitude.

Were these also taken away from the sum of his activities, his researches in various branches of science, in anatomy, physiology, geology, botany, astronomy, optics, mechanics would still suffice to show to how high a place he is entitled in the history of human culture.

His study of science was in inception a part of the artist's fuller equipment—that he might thereby know the structure of what he represented and the laws of its formation.

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It was continued independently of the artistic pur-

pose and ultimately superseded it. The work in art of his later years was either undertaken as illustrating some principle, or as a compromise with necessity, which parted him perforce from the study of natural phenomena and primary causes.

As containing the relation of the two stages self-revealed, his own manuscripts form the best record of his life. They consist of notes of his studies, fragments of letters, personal memoranda, extracts from books, notes of compositions, fragments of treatises, maxims and reflections.

To these I have referred where they directly concern his artistic work or where dated records form landmarks in the chronology.

His life as an artist is a field well trodden. In my state of all-indebtedness to the researches of specialists I can only acknowledge my debt where it is heaviest, viz., to Dr. Richter's "Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci," to Dr. Müller-Walde's articles in the *Jahrbuch*, to Professor Uzielli's "Ricerche," to the monograph by Dr. Solmi, and to Mr. Berenson's "Drawings of the Florentine Painters."

E. McC.

December, 1903.

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LEONARDO DA VINCI

PART I

CHAPTER I

THE RECORDS UP TO 1493

IN the taxation return¹ made by Antonio da Vinci for the year 1457 his household is stated to consist of his wife, Monna Lucia, aged sixty-four; his son, Ser Piero, aged thirty; another son, Francesco, aged twenty-two; Albiera, the wife of Ser Piero, aged twenty-one; and Lionardo, illegitimate son of the said Ser Piero, aged five, whose mother was Chateria (Caterina), who at the time of the taxation return was the wife of Chartabriga di Piero del Vaccha, of Vinci.

This is the source of the accepted belief that Leonardo was born in 1452. It is confirmed by a taxation return for 1469² in which his age is given as seventeen. The "Anonimo Fiorentino" says his mother was of gentle blood. There are several references in Leonardo's MSS. to Caterina, his housekeeper, and a detailed statement of the costs of her interment, but there is nothing to suggest that this Caterina was his mother.

¹ Gaye, "Carteggio," i. 223.

² Uzielli (1872), Doc. III.

His father, Ser Piero da Vinci, notary to the Signoria of Florence in 1469 and 1483, represented the fifth consecutive generation of his ancestors who had followed the vocation of notary at Florence, Vinci or Anchiano.

In the year of Leonardo's birth he married Albiera di Giovanni Amadori, one of a family of the Florentine nobility. The "Anonimo's" statement as to the status of Leonardo's mother may be a confusion of this fact.

Ser Piero was married four times, and had eleven children by his third and fourth wives, the eldest being born in 1476.

Paolo Giovio says, "*Leonardus e Vincio ignobili Etruriae vico.*"

The village of Vinci lies on the western slope of Monte Albano, about six miles from Empoli. Tradition fixes Leonardo's birth at Anchiano, in a low, red-tiled, two-storied house with yellow plastered rubble walls, which stands about a mile and a half above Vinci on a spur of the hills. In a vineyard about twenty yards away from this house are the foundations of the walls of a smaller house, pointed out to me as that in which, according to the Sindaco of Vinci, the birth actually took place. The position of Vinci, which commands the valley of the Arno, was of strategic importance in the wars between Florence and the neighbouring republics. The castle was unsuccessfully besieged by Sir John Hawkwood in 1361, but after this it appears no more in history. At Vinci, at his grandfather's house, Leonardo passed the years of his childhood and youth. Ser Antonio died before 1469, when the family occupied another house at Vinci and part of a house at Florence on the site of what is now the Palazzo Gondi in the Piazza di S. Firenze.

At about this date—M. Ravaisson-Mollien says conjecturally in 1470—Leonardo entered the *bottega* of Andrea Verrocchio, where Lorenzo di Credi became his fellow-pupil, and where he became acquainted with Botticelli and Perugino. In the beginning of July, 1472, his name appears in the Red Book of the Debtors and Creditors of the Company of Painters of Florence as being then admitted to membership.¹

A pen drawing in the Uffizi of a valley between two ranges of hills, that on the left crowned by a fortified town, is inscribed "the day of S. Mary of the Snow, the 5th day of August, 1473." It is the earliest of Leonardo's dated work. His method of writing is already from right to left. The festival of "S. Mary of the Snow" was a customary one in Italy, where are many churches with this dedication. We may instance that in Siena, built by Francesco di Giorgio. Professor Uzielli says the scene recalls the valley of the Arno under Montelupo, with Monte Albano and the Pisan hills. The resemblance though not exact is considerable; the landscape is, at any rate, Tuscan in character.

He is mentioned in two documents dated 1476,² and was then still living with Verrocchio.

To the following year M. Ravaisson-Mollien would assign the date of his leaving Verrocchio's *bottega* and the commencement of his period of service under Lorenzo de' Medici, of which the "Anonimo Fiorentino" speaks.

On the 1st of January, 1478,³ he received a commission for an altarpiece for the chapel of S. Bernard in the

¹ Uzielli (1872), Doc. V.

² Scognamiglio, Doc. XVI., XVII.

³ "Arch. Stor. Ital.," Series III. vol. xvi.

Palazzo Vecchio. On the 16th of March he was paid twenty-five florins on account of this work. Only eight days before giving the commission to Leonardo, the Signoria had bestowed it upon Piero del Pollaiuolo. The suddenness of the change in their decision suggests that the influence of Lorenzo de' Medici had been exerted on behalf of his *protégé*. But the work was never executed, and the Signoria, after waiting five years, gave the commission to Domenico Ghirlandaio, and finally to Filippino Lippi, who completed it in 1485.

In March, 1480,¹ Leonardo was commissioned by the monks of S. Donato at Scopeto, outside the Porta Romana, to paint the altarpiece for the high altar. The time allowed for the work was twenty-four or at most thirty months. In case he failed to complete it within this time the monks reserved power to terminate the contract without compensation. His remuneration was fixed as a third of a small property in the Val d'Elsa, or—at the discretion of the monks—300 florins. He undertook to provide his own colours and gold and all other materials. The records of the monastery mention the advance of various sums on account for colours, and in July, 1481, the sending to him at Florence a load of wood and 1 lira 6 soldi for painting the clock. Whatever progress the work may have made, it was never completed, and in 1496 the monks gave the commission to Filippino Lippi. He painted for them the *Adoration of the Magi* now in the Uffizi.

There is no direct evidence as to the subject of

¹ "Arch. Stor. Ital.," Series III., vol. xvi. The memorandum is dated July, 1481. Its opening words show the date of the commission: "Lionardo di Ser Piero da Vinci si à tolto a dipignere una nostra Pala per l'altare maggiore per infino di marzo 1480, . . ."



Alinari photo]

[Accademia, Florence

THE ANGELS IN THE "BAPTISM OF CHRIST"

Leonardo's composition for either of these commissions. The fact of Leonardo's unfinished picture of the *Adoration of the Magi* in the Uffizi being almost exactly similar in size to Filippino's picture, and that size the very unusual one of an almost exact square, suggests that they were intended for the same altarpiece, and that Filippino, in taking up Leonardo's commission, also took his subject. It is also possible to trace a direct connection between the two pictures. In the figure kneeling before the Virgin, immediately to the right, Filippino has very closely reproduced in reverse profile the features and pose of head of the youngest of the Magi in Leonardo's picture.

M. Müntz holds that Leonardo's picture for the monks of S. Donato was more advanced than the Uffizi cartoon, which is only a sketch in bistre, and the records of the monastery show that ultramarine was provided for Leonardo's work. But the entry of the ultramarine is a month previous to the payment to Leonardo for painting the clock, and is probably connected with it.

The subject of an altarpiece for a chapel of S. Bernard would presumably refer to the saint, as did the former altarpiece by Bernardo Daddi and that executed in 1485 by Filippino Lippi, which was placed in the Sala del Consiglio instead of the chapel. It is now in the Uffizi. It represents the Madonna enthroned with S. Victor, S. John the Baptist, S. Bernard and S. Zenobius.

The "Anonimo Fiorentino" refers to it in the life of Filippino: "He painted in the lesser council chamber of the Palace of the Signoria the altarpiece containing a Madonna with other figures which Leonardo had commenced to paint"; and in the life of Leonardo he says it was finished by Filippino from his cartoon. The com-

position of the picture gives no support to these statements. Can their origin have been a similarity in subject?

A pen drawing in the Uffizi (No. 446) of an old man's head in right profile, and a head of a young man in left profile with shaven crown looking up, has below it a note partly torn, "... bre 1478 ichomiciai le. 2. Vgine Marie." The preceding letter partly visible was I believe *o*. The month, from its termination, must be one of the last four, say, "October 1478 I commenced the two of the Virgin Mary."

The younger of the two heads is connected with S. Leonard in the Berlin *Ascension of Christ*, which is the work of a pupil who took the head from the drawing.

The other head presents strong analogies to one of an old man in a sheet of studies for the *Adoration* in the British Museum.

Both heads might in fact be studies for the *Adoration*, the youthful head having a strong resemblance to the figure seen in profile with raised right hand on the right of the Madonna in the Uffizi cartoon.

But 1478 is the year of the commission for the chapel of S. Bernard for which the picture which he began contained, according to the "Anonimo," "a Madonna with other figures." The most natural interpretation of this note is that it refers to studies for this composition, marking the date at which Leonardo commenced two alternative cartoons.

The younger of the two heads may be a study for the same composition. The devout upturned gaze suggests S. Bernard beholding the Madonna in vision. The characteristics of the face are not dissimilar to the far less

dramatic presentation of the saint in Filippino's picture in the Uffizi.

A drawing in the collection of M. Bonnat can also with certainty be ascribed to this period. It represents the body of a young man hanging suspended from a rope, with long loose garments, with his hands bound behind his back. The face is sketched again at the bottom of the sheet. Above the drawing is the note: "Small tan-coloured cap, black satin doublet, lined black jerkin, blue cloak lined with fur of foxes' breasts, and the collar of the cloak covered with velvet speckled black and red; Bernardo di Bandino Baroncelli; black hose."

This ringleader in the conspiracy of the Pazzi, who was the first to stab Giuliano de' Medici, escaped from the fury of the populace and fled to Constantinople, but was given up by the Sultan to Lorenzo's emissaries, taken back to Florence and hanged from a window of the Bargello on the 29th of December, 1479. The drawing proves that Leonardo was then in Florence. The details of the description suggest that the sketch was intended to serve as material for a picture.

Vasari mentions a decree of the Signoria that the traitors should be painted in fresco on the façade of the Bargello, but attributes the execution of the work to Andrea del Castagno, who at the time of the conspiracy had already been dead twenty years. The real authorship is established by an entry in the minutes of the Council of Eight, dated 21st July, 1478, sanctioning the payment of forty florins to Botticelli for his labour in painting the traitors.

The "Anonimo Fiorentino" says that Bernardo di Bandini was represented in Botticelli's fresco hanging by the

Fiorentino" that Leonardo, when aged thirty, was sent by Lorenzo de' Medici to the Duke of Milan with a lute, from which it would follow that he went to Milan in 1482 or 1483.

The Milanese Court offered a greater scope for his ambition. How high that ambition soared the records of his life at Milan set forth; but it is foreshadowed in the draft of a letter¹ in which Leonardo offered his services to Ludovic. The writing is from left to right, and M. Ravaisson-Mollien considers in consequence that the original connection of the letter with Leonardo is a matter of uncertainty. "The handwriting in Leonardo's manuscripts is from right to left." Occasionally, however, he wrote in the usual manner. Two such instances of his signature may be cited, viz., that on No. 1640 of the Louvre drawings, *The Scene of Magic*, and that reproduced from the Windsor MSS. on p. 175 of Mr. Cook's "Spirals." His manuscripts were usually intended solely for his own use; but if this letter were to be read by Ludovic it would have to be written presumably in the ordinary manner, and the draft at its commencement may have bid fair to be the definite letter. But suppose it written by a pupil! The question of calligraphy is of little import. The contents are the strongest proof of its authenticity.

"Having, most illustrious lord, seen and considered the experiments of all those who pass as masters in the art of inventing instruments of war, and finding that their inventions differ in no way from those in common use, I am emboldened, without prejudice to anyone, to solicit an opportunity of acquainting your Excellency with certain of my secrets:

"1. I can construct bridges which are very light and strong

¹ Cod. Atl., 391 r.

and very portable, with which to pursue and defeat the enemy; and others more solid, which resist fire or assault, yet are easily removed and placed in position; and I can also burn and destroy those of the enemy.

"2. In case of a siege I can cut off water from the trenches and make pontoons and scaling ladders and other similar contrivances.

"3. If by reason of the elevation or the strength of its position a place cannot be bombarded, I can demolish every fortress if its foundations have not been set on stone.

"4. I can also make a kind of cannon which is light and easy of transport, with which to hurl small stones like hail, and of which the smoke causes great terror to the enemy, so that they suffer heavy loss and confusion.

"5. I can noiselessly construct to any prescribed point subterranean passages either straight or winding, passing if necessary underneath trenches or a river.

"6. I can make armoured wagons carrying artillery which shall break through the most serried ranks of the enemy, and so open a safe passage for the infantry.

"7. If occasion should arise I can construct cannon and mortars and light ordnance in shape both ornamental and useful and different from those in common use.

"8. Where it is impossible to use cannon I can supply in their stead catapults, mangonels, *trabocchi*, and other instruments of admirable efficacy not in general use. In short, as occasion requires I can supply infinite means of attack and defence.

"9. And if the fight should take place upon the sea I can construct many engines most suitable either for attack or defence, and ships which can resist the fire of the heaviest cannon, and powders or vapours.

"10. In time of peace I believe that I can give you as complete satisfaction as any one else in the construction of buildings both public and private, and in conducting water from one place to another.

"I can further execute sculpture in marble, bronze or clay, also in painting I can do as much as any one else whoever he may be.

"Moreover I would undertake the commission of the bronze Horse, which shall endue with immortal glory and eternal honour the auspicious memory of your father and of the illustrious house of Sforza.

"And if any of the aforesaid things should seem to anyone impossible or impracticable, I offer myself as ready to make trial of them in your park or in whatever place shall please your Excellency, to whom I commend myself with all possible humility."

In so far as the evidence of Leonardo's own MSS. can avail to substantiate the claims made in this astonishing document they are found to have been literally true. Dr. Müller-Walde,¹ in the section of his work which treats of Leonardo as military engineer, has proved by quotations and sketches taken from the MSS. at Milan, Paris and Windsor that Leonardo did in fact study deeply the construction and use of each method and instrument of warfare of which the first seven clauses of the letter offer the practical application. It would be difficult to conceive who could have had a sufficiently comprehensive knowledge of Leonardo's studies to enable him to make without error the statements made in the letter, or who could have had any possible motive in doing so.

Leonardo looked to find immediate employment for his activities as military engineer. Cursory in comparison with the preceding detail is the enumeration of his artistic activities in the final clauses—introduced by the phrase, "in time of peace," as a period in the future.

¹ "L. da V. Lebenskizze, etc.," pp. 139-232.

The war clouds which are seldom absent from a usurper's political horizon loomed portentously above Ludovic's path at the outset, and never wholly lifted throughout the two decades of his power. His lavish subsidies, which impoverished Milan, his skill in pitting adversary against adversary, the grace in diplomacy of the Duchess Beatrice all availed only to delay the impending storm, which broke and swept him before it in the autumn of 1499. In the first years of his regency Venice was his greatest menace, and the reference to the possibility of combats being by sea suggests Venice as the enemy against whom arose the immediate occasion for the services which the letter offered. Hostilities broke out between the two states in 1483, but the issue was reached by diplomacy, not by arms. Ludovic preferred other methods of combat, and there is nothing to show that at this period he employed Leonardo as military engineer.

The record of performance in the Duke's service relates to the final clauses of the letter. We may instance his work on the statue, his design for the cupola of the Duomo, the sketches of the pavilion for the garden of the Duchess of Milan, the architectural studies for palaces and castles, the notes and sketches in reference to the fertilizing of the plain of the Lomellina by constructing water-courses, and the plans for rendering navigable the Martesana canal.

His talent as musician, as to which there is rare unanimity among the early biographers, finds no place in the letter. It was as musician, according to Vasari, that he made his first appearance in Milan, sent, according to the "Anonimo Fiorentino," by Lorenzo with a lute as a



Alinari photo

STUDY OF LANDSCAPE

(DATED 1473)

[Uffizi Gallery, Florence]

present to Ludovic. This may, as Dr. Richter suggests, be the very reason of his silence as to his musical proficiency; for it needed no mention in a recital of talents by the exercise of which he hoped to be retained in Ludovic's service.

Leonardo in the draft of a letter to the Commissioners of Buildings at Piacenza¹ speaks of himself as having been invited from Florence to make the equestrian statue of the Duke Francesco. Of all the offers of service which the letter to Ludovic contained this alone would seem to have found immediate acceptance.

The letter to Piacenza thus confirms the testimony of Sabba da Castiglione and the "Anonimo Fiorentino" as to the date at which he proceeded to Milan. But the commission given, it was some years before he did much towards carrying it to completion. There is no evidence of his presence in Milan between 1483 and 1487. It might seem not unnatural that these years, if spent in Milan, should be comparatively without record, for Leonardo, who always worked slowly, would have to win his position. But when references do occur they are such as to suggest that his Florentine prestige attended him at the outset, and that he immediately stepped into the foremost place among the artists of Ludovic's court; cf. the statement of Bellincioni that Ludovic

Da Fiorenza un Apelle ha qui condotto.

These four years constitute a rather perplexing hiatus in the history of Leonardo's life. According to the "Anonimo Fiorentino" he left Milan after his first visit there on Lorenzo's mission, and returned for a time to Florence.

¹ C. A., 323 r. and v.

But there are absolutely no records of his presence in Florence between 1481 and 1495, nor anywhere in Italy between 1483 and 1487. May we fill the void in part by interpreting as records of actual experience the letters in the "Codice Atlantico"¹ addressed to the Devatdar of Syria, the lieutenant of the Sultan of Egypt, the writer being, as he states, employed in the Sultan's service as engineer in Armenia? The letters contain somewhat exculpatory references to the performance of official duties, and a description of the regions of Mount Taurus and of the effects of an earthquake or landslip in those parts. Accompanying the text are drawings of rock formations and scenery, and there is also a sketch map of Armenia in which the classical instead of the mediaeval forms of names have been used.

For a detailed consideration of the letters and the varied interpretations of them, which range from their acceptance as fact to their treatment as a flight of fantasy, with the halfway house of considering them the record of the travels of another, I must refer to the works of Dr. Richter, Professor Uzielli, and the articles by Professor Govi and Mr. Douglas Freshfield. I am disposed to regard the letters as statements of fact, and to believe that Leonardo was in Syria in a capacity somewhat analogous to that in which he had offered his services to Ludovic Sforza, and did subsequently serve Caesar Borgia.

In 1487 he was established in Milan in the service of Ludovic. From this date down to the close of 1499 his presence there except for brief intervals is shown by records of his work. Sabba da Castiglione, by way of explaining how few of his paintings were to be seen

¹ C. A., 145 r. and v., 214 v.

at Milan besides the *Last Supper*, says that "when he ought to have worked at painting, in which he would without doubt have proved a new Apelles, he gave himself up entirely to Geometry, Architecture and Anatomy."¹ But he was also general artificer to the Court. He appears as *deus ex machina* to perform whatever the occasion required.

He is described as Ludovic's architect in the record of the application made to him for a design for the cupola of the cathedral.² Payments commencing in August, 1487, were made to him and to a wood-carver in his service by the Consiglio della Fabbrica del Duomo for the expenses of the construction of a model completed on the 11th of January, 1488. Such of his drawings as are studies for it are classified by M. de Geymüller and Dr. Richter in treating of his work in architecture (Richter, ii.).

On the 10th of May, 1488, Leonardo obtained the return of his model on condition of restoring it if required. On the 17th he received money on account for the expenses of constructing a second model, but of this there is no record. The commission was finally awarded the Milanese architects, Omodei and Dolcebuono, in April, 1490.

In June of the same year Leonardo left Milan with Francesco di Giorgio to advise as to the construction of the cathedral at Pavia. They were the guests of the city, and their bill at the Locanda del Saracino, amounting to twenty lire, was paid on June 21st. Immediately afterwards Francesco di Giorgio returned to Milan.

¹ "Ricordi" (1561), 115 v.

² Calvi, "Notizie, etc." (1869), p. 18.

Leonardo remained in Pavia until the close of the year, returning in consequence of a letter sent by the Duke's secretary to all the Milanese artists in connection with the preparations for the marriage of Ludovic with Beatrice, and of Anne, sister of Gian Galeazzo, with Alfonso d'Este.

His time was spent in study and observation. He speaks in his MSS. of consulting Vitellio's treatise on Mathematics in the Library. He sketched churches, *e.g.*, *Santa Maria in Pertica di Pavia*. He described the crenellation of the castle. Watching the rebuilding of a part of the city wall which stood on the river bank, he noted the varying effects of time in the various woods used in the piles of its foundations.

He also studied the antique equestrian statue of Regisole, which the "Anonimo" described as representing Odoacer, King of the Goths.¹ It stood in the Piazza del Duomo until its destruction in 1796. The composition is preserved in a fresco in S. Teodoro at Pavia. Dr. Müller-Walde connects such drawings as seem to owe suggestion to it with the Trivulzio monument, a project of his later years. To me it seems more probable that notes and sketches were made during this residence at Pavia, and refer to the Sforza statue, which he recommended in April of the same year.

In February, 1489, he had constructed the scenery for a representation of "Il Paradiso" by Bernardo Bellincioni, written in honour of the marriage of Gian Galeazzo with Isabella of Aragon. It opened with an address by Jove to the planets, after which they all descended to earth to praise the Duchess Isabella. After considerable debate Apollo presents the lady with a book of words,

¹ *I.e.*, "The Anonimo (Morelliano)." Edit. Williamson, p. 69.



Brogi photo

STUDY OF HEADS
WITH NOTE DATED 1478

[Uffizi Gallery, Florence]

and the play ends with songs by the Graces and the Virtues.

In January, 1491, he was present in the house of Galeazzo di San Severino to arrange the festival of the tournament, and records rather helplessly the thefts and malpractices of his apprentice, Giacomo, aged ten, on this occasion as also repeatedly before at Pavia.¹

A sketch of pulleys and cords inscribed "in the Cathedral for the pulley of the Nail of the Cross,"² is cited by Amoretti to show that in 1489 Leonardo constructed an apparatus of pulleys and cords to transport the relic of the Sacred Nail to a more venerable place in the cathedral. It is not, however, possible to ascertain on what evidence Amoretti relied in fixing the date of the ceremony, and Dr. Richter dates the MS. as written in 1502.

His employment as architect in the service of the Court is to be inferred from a drawing of a dome-shaped pavilion inscribed "pavilion of the garden of the Duchess of Milan," and another of a ground-plan "foundation of the pavilion which is in the middle of the labyrinth of the Duke of Milan." On the same page³ is the date 10 July, 1492. Such a pavilion in the labyrinth of the garden of the castle existed in 1480, and was then described by Giovanni Ridolfi,⁴ son of the Florentine orator, who stated the foundation to be of brick, the rest being presumably of more fragile material. Leonardo's drawing may have been a sketch for a more solid structure in its stead. Other notes⁵ relate to the construc-

¹ MSS. Inst. C., 15 a.

² MSS. Inst. L., 15 a.

³ MSS. Inst. B., 12 a.

⁴ MS. in Bibl. Magliab., M.-W., Bei., i. 71.

⁵ MSS. Inst. B., 34, and C. A., 104 r. b.

and shade constitutes perhaps the most fundamental difference between the works which he executed after his removal to Milan and those of his Florentine contemporaries. The study had already occupied his thoughts while in Florence, and the result is in evidence in the *Adoration*.

At Milan, however, in this period of many undertakings the results of his study of the problem assumed literary form. The date is fixed by a note in the MSS. of the Institut C. 15: "On the 23rd of April, 1490, I commenced this book and recommenced the horse."

The MS. in which the note occurs treats of "light and shade," the contents being intended to form part of the "Trattato della Pittura."

CHAPTER II

THE SCULPTURE

THE note of his recommencing the horse in April, 1490, is the earliest dated reference in Leonardo's own MSS. to his work upon the equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza, by which the political sagacity of Ludovic purposed to commemorate the founder of his dynasty.

It was by his work on this statue that the artist's genius made the deepest impress upon the imagination of his contemporaries. The inception of the project dated back to 1472, when Galeazzo Maria Sforza gave the commission to Cristoforo and Antonio Mantegazza, the sculptors who decorated the Certosa with bas-reliefs. They hesitated to undertake a work of such magnitude, and apparently never made a beginning.

Ludovic took up the project very soon after he seized the reins of power in 1479, and presumably caused it to be known in Florence; for, according to Vasari, Antonio Pollaiuolo—who is not known ever to have been at Milan—made for Ludovic a design and model for an equestrian statue of the Duke Francesco. Two such drawings Vasari possessed. In one the duke was represented with the city of Verona beneath. In the other, now at Munich, he is

in full armour, making his horse leap on to a fallen soldier.¹ The similarity of conception between this drawing and such of Leonardo's studies as represent the horse galloping suggests that the form of the statue was prescribed by Ludovic. The theory of a competition in which the two artists took part requires corroboration and is not altogether borne out by such evidence as we possess. I believe that Pollaiuolo's drawings for the statue preceded any of those by Leonardo.

The verses of Baldassare Taccone on the erection of Leonardo's model in 1493 say that Ludovic had long wished to erect the statue, his difficulty had been to find a Leonardo:

E se più presto non s'è principiato,
la voglia del Signor fu sempre pronta;
non era un Lionardo ancor trovato.

How widely his intention was known is shown by the fact that in 1482 Francesco d'Arrigoni sent from Naples certain Latin epigrams for the base of the statue. Neither these nor the accompanying letter to Ludovic contain any phrase which would show either that the poet knew to whom the commission had been given or that the statue was actually commenced.

The date at which the commission was given to Leonardo is to be deduced primarily from the statement of Fra Sabba da Castiglione that he laboured on it for sixteen years. As he left Milan before the close of 1499, he must therefore have commenced as early as 1483.

In the dedication to Ludovic of *De Divina Proportione* Fra Luca Pacioli, mentioning Leonardo as one of those present at a "*laudabile e scientifico duello*" (whatever that

¹ Reproduced in Courajod, "L. de V. et la statue de F. Sforza."

Leonardo to fresh activity. The poet Piattino Piatti, in a letter of August 31, 1489, says that he had applied to him and to others for an epigram for the base of the statue.

It does not follow that the model was then completed. The epigrams with which the history of the statue is bestrewn are almost as thick as Vallombrosa's autumnal leaves. Arrigoni's epigrams undoubtedly preceded its construction. Leonardo would seem to have been somewhat previous in giving the "*Literati*" a theme. In the following spring he commenced a fresh model. "On the 23rd of April, 1490, I commenced this book and recommenced the horse." This model, presumably, was that erected in 1493 in the court of the Castle of the Visconti on the occasion of the marriage of Bianca Maria Sforza with the Emperor Maximilian.

Baldassare Taccone¹ has described the scene:

Vedi che in corte fa far di metallo,
Per memoria del Padre un gran colosso
I' credo fermamente e senza fallo
Che Gretia e Roma mai vide il più grosso,
Guarda pur come è bello quel cavallo!
Leonardo Vinci a farlo sol s' è mosso.

Taccone is somewhat contradictory, and must be allowed a poet's licence. The first of these lines suggests that the statue was already cast in bronze, the last that it was in an unfinished condition.

Whereas Taccone only refers to the horse, the lines of Pietro Lazzarone,² "*De Nuptiis Imperatorie Maiestatis*," state that the statue had the figure of the rider:

¹ Uzielli (1896), p. 166.

² *Ibid.*

Fronte stabat prima, quem totus noverat orbis
 Sfortiae Franciscus Ligurum dominator et altae
 Insubriae, portatus equo

An epigram which, from the reference in it to Gian Galeazzo, must have been written before his death in October, 1494, is inscribed "Johannes Tollentinus in divi Francisci Sfortiae erea statua." But this inscription, Taccone's line, Pacioli's estimate of its weight, the couplet in which Lancino Curzio¹ foretold the supreme moment:

Expectant animi, molemque futuram
 Suspiciunt; fluat aes; vox erit: Ecce deus,

these are all anticipations of an event which was never realized.

The statue was never cast in bronze. Hence the taunt uttered by Michelangelo to Leonardo in Florence, which the "Anonimo Fiorentino" records: "tu, che facesti un disegno d'uno cavallo per gittarlo di bronzo e non lo potesti gittare, et per vergogna lo lasciasti stare!"

The "Anonimo Fiorentino" says that the casting in bronze was considered an impossibility because Leonardo wished to cast it in one piece, and the work remained unfinished.

The real cause was not in his control. Ludovic had drained his exchequer by subsidies to his allies, and he had no money either for the expense of casting the statue or for the salaries of his servants. This is shown by the fragments of a letter from Leonardo to the Duke. It was written between the 9th of November, 1497, and the 9th of February, 1498, *i.e.*, between the date when, as the result of a quarrel with Leonardo, the Duke was endeavouring to find an artist to carry on his work in the

¹ Uzielli (1896), p. 178.



[British Museum

STUDY FOR HEAD OF A WARRIOR

Castle, and the occasion of their meeting at the assembly of the "*Literati*"—Pacioli's "*laudabile e scientifico duello*"—which was presumably preceded by a reconciliation. To this the letter probably formed the first tentative step. It reveals the darker side of life at Ludovic's court. The broken sentences of the torn sheet are in keeping with the reluctance of its theme. He is prouder in this utterance of humility than in his first offer of service:

"My Lord, knowing the mind of your Excellency to be occupied . . .
to remind your Lordship of my small matters and the arts put to silence . . .
that my silence was the cause of making your Lordship despise . . .
my life in your service, I hold myself ever ready to obey . . .
of the horse I will say nothing because I know the times . . .
to your Lordship how I was two years in arrears with my salary for the . . .
with two skilled workmen whose salary and expenses I had always paid . . .
that at last I found I had advanced the said work about 15 lire . . .
works of fame by which I could shew to those who shall see them that I have been . . .
everywhere, but I do not know where I could bestow my work to . . .
I having been taken up with gaining a living . . .
not being informed how it is, I find myself . . .
you remember the commission to paint the Camerini . . .
I conveyed to your Lordship only requesting . . ."¹

The work upon the statue had already been abandoned for a considerable period of time. No dated references show him at work upon it after the model was exhibited in 1493. The question whether two models were in existence rests upon whether his preparations had already reached this stage before the recommencement in April, 1490. In all probability the model exhibited in 1493 was identical with the statue of which Fra Sabba da Castiglione records the destruction when the French entered Milan: "I have to record—and I cannot speak of it without grief and indignation—so noble and masterly a work made a target by the Gascon bowmen."

¹ C. A., 335 v.

This is believed to have taken place in April, 1500, after the battle of Novara, as on the occasion of the first French occupation in October, 1499, the soldiers were specially ordered to refrain from pillage. Vasari also says it was totally destroyed by the French when they entered Milan. The destruction can only have been partial. Enough was left to cause the Duke of Ferrara to write to his resident at Milan, Giovanni Valla, on the 19th of September, 1501, to obtain from the Cardinal of Rouen "the model of a horse which the Lord Ludovic intended to have cast, which model was made by the Master Leonardo," which, he said, was "daily perishing."¹ The last record of it is in the reply of Giovanni Valla, of September 24th, to the effect that the Cardinal had expressed himself as willing, but had stated that he had no authority to permit its removal without the express permission of Louis XII.

"It is better to imitate the works of antiquity than modern works."² The note is one of several made by Leonardo with reference to the bronze equestrian statue of Regisole at Pavia, of which he said the movement was more admirable than anything else.

His notes continue: "One cannot have both beauty and utility as seen in fortresses and men." "The trot is almost the nature of the free horse." "Where natural vivacity is lacking it is necessary to create it by art." It is thus to seek principles that Leonardo studied the antique in equestrian statuary. His research was only limited by opportunity.

His interest in the representation of the horse found

¹ Campori, "Nuovi Documenti," etc.

² C. A., 147 r.

expression in his art at least as early as the cartoon for the *Adoration of the Magi*.

The equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius restored by order of Sextus IV., and set up in 1473 in the Piazza of S. Giovanni in Laterano, had been studied by Verrocchio, who was then in Rome doing work in silver for the Pope. Vasari associates his study of antique statuary in Rome, and especially of this statue, with his decision to seek work as sculptor rather than goldsmith.

Presumably the knowledge of this statue, which certain of Leonardo's drawings for the Sforza statue presuppose, was acquired by him from drawings seen in Verrocchio's studio, where also studies of antique heads may have inspired several drawings at Windsor of heads full of classic suggestion which served as types for certain of the Apostles. Verrocchio, after being given the commission for the statue of Bartolommeo Colleoni by the Venetian Senate in 1479, remained for some years in Florence preparing for the work, and Leonardo, though no longer his pupil, would be acquainted with his studies for it. It was in the art of sculpture that Leonardo received most from the elder painter. The marble bust of the *Lady with the Bouquet* in the Bargello is almost the prototype of the *Mona Lisa*.

The Bartolommeo Colleoni statue at Venice, together with the Gattamelata statue by Donatello at Padua are the only examples of equestrian statuary of the Quattrocento which are of the same high lineage as was the Sforza statue; linked with antique work by study that has won something of its supreme gift of form, yet remaining strong in their own strength. Instead of pursuit of the "symmetria prisca"—that repose which only

Greek art has ever uttered—they choose the moment of quivering tendon when the impulse of action is coursing like quicksilver through the veins.

Leonardo sketched the horse in every conceivable position. He studied its anatomy as scientifically as he did the anatomy of man. According to Vasari a book of such studies was destroyed at the time of the French occupation of Milan.

Measurements and drawings of a horse in the MSS. are accompanied by the notes "Messer Galeazzo's big genet"; "Messer Galeazzo's Sicilian"; "Measurement of the Sicilian, the leg from behind, seen full in front, raised and extended."¹

Galeazzo is the famous captain, Galeazzo di San Severino, in whose house Leonardo stayed in January 1491, to devise costumes for a tournament. From 1490 to 1493 was the period of his most concentrated activity upon the statue, and with it, therefore, we may specially connect this study of the proportions of one of the captain's chargers.

The studies for the statue fall into two main divisions according as they represent the horse as walking or galloping.

The former probably contain the definite conception as it appeared in the model, although the most natural interpretation of Paolo Giovio's words "*cujus vehementer incitati ac anhelantis*" is that they refer to the action of a galloping horse, and Paolo Giovio may have seen the statue before its destruction. But the words do not forbid the opposite interpretation. They would have very little exaggeration if any, if applied to some of the drawings

¹ R., 716-718.



Braun photo]

[The Louvre

STUDY FOR THE "ADORATION OF THE MAGI"

Plate 8

in which the horse is represented walking, *e.g.*, one at Windsor,¹ where the arched neck, dilated nostrils and quivering mouth are the embodiment of vigour and impetuosity.

The horse is represented as walking in all except one of the drawings which illustrate the notes on the making of the mould and the process of casting.

A page of the Windsor MSS.² in which the notes read like the record of an actual experiment, contains a small drawing of a horse in a mould represented as walking, and above is a drawing of a horse walking with rider.

A drawing in red chalk³ represents a horse walking, the figure being inclosed in a scaffolding such as might serve on the occasion of the conveyance of the model through the streets of Milan in 1493. At the side is the note, "all the heads of the large nails," these being presumably the bolts which fasten the frame together.

The drawings with the horse galloping have nothing to connect them with the stage of actual construction.

The indirect testimony of Leonardo's own MSS. as to the form chosen in the model is at any rate more weighty than Paolo Giovio's choice of words.

The similarity of Pollaiuolo's design with some of Leonardo's studies which have the horse galloping, points to this type being Ludovic's original suggestion. Leonardo worked intermittently, dissatisfied with the result, and subsequently recommenced the horse, as he says, in 1490, and then represented it as walking, according to the opinion which he expressed in his notes at Pavia in the following year, that "the trot is of the nature of the free

¹ R., LXXII. 3.

² R., 711 and LXXV.

³ C. A., 216 v.

horse," in allowing the more unfettered interpretation of natural movement. This conception he carried up to the stage of the model exhibited in 1493. There is no record of the construction of any subsequent model, but his letters show that he still hoped to finish the statue when opportunity might arise; when neither the Duke's necessities nor as a consequence his own were so urgent, when he had earned enough by other commissions to be able again to devote himself to it. He may have returned to the earlier scheme, and prepared designs to re-awaken the Duke's zest by a fresh conception of the old *motif* of the Sforza trampling on his enemies. A black chalk drawing at Windsor, with the horse galloping,¹ would certainly seem to be of later date than 1493.

The attempt to interpret the growth of the conception from the drawings is complicated by the fact that the Sforza statue was not the only project to which they may refer.

The Codice Atlantico² contains a statement of the cost of construction of a monument to the Marshal Gian Giacomo Trivulzio to consist of a richly decorated tomb surmounted by a life-sized bronze equestrian statue. The slab of marble on which the statue stood was to be decorated with a frieze and eight figures, and was to rest upon eight fluted columns with bronze capitals.

Within these would lie the recumbent figure of the general. The base was to be decorated with six bas-reliefs and six harpies bearing candelabra.

This arrangement of detail is not found in its entirety in any of the drawings. The one at Windsor,³ which recalls in some degree the Colleoni statue, seems a simplifi-

¹ R., LXVIII.

² C. A., 179 v.

³ R., LXXIV,



Alinari photo

STUDY FOR BACKGROUND OF THE "ADORATION OF THE MAGI"

[Uffizi Gallery, Florence]

cation of the design and may be tentatively connected with the Trivulzio project. The recumbent figure within the columns of the open base is not mentioned in any reference to the Sforza statue. This is the only drawing which presents the appearance of a sepulchral monument which should stand within a church rather than a statue to stand in an open Piazza.

None of the drawings in which the horse is leaping on a fallen soldier can be connected with the Trivulzio project except by conjecture. All that we know of it is contained in the estimate of the cost of its construction, with detail so precise that had a foot soldier been part of the design the metal and necessary labour would have been specified as it is for every other part of the monument.

Three sketches of a crouching figure, designed perhaps to decorate the base, on a sheet with sketches for the Anghiari Cartoon¹ have led to the suggestion that it was to arrange for the Trivulzio monument that he obtained three months' leave of absence from the Signoria in 1506. But de Chaumont was then Governor of Milan, and in a letter to the Signoria in August, he asked them to prolong Leonardo's leave because he was engaged upon a work for him which he wanted to have finished.²

Trivulzio died in 1518. He entered Milan in command of the French after defeating Ludovic at Novara in 1500. At some period between these dates Leonardo made the estimate of the cost of his monument.

As sculptor Leonardo is now nothing more than a name.

¹ Windsor MSS., "Notes et Croquis sur l'Anatomie du Cheval," 50 r.

² Gaye, "Carteggio," vol. ii., No. XXXIII.

Vasari mentions certain "heads of women smiling," heads of children, and a small wax model of the Sforza statue. Lomazzo possessed a head in terra-cotta of the Child Christ made, he says, by Leonardo, and mentions a clay relief of a horse in the possession of Leone Aretino. Nothing is known of any of these works. Various others have been attributed to him by recent conjecture—most reasonably in the case of such as show most strongly Verrocchiesque influence. Works of this quality are the terra-cotta statuette of S. John the Baptist at South Kensington, and the relief of two naked youths bearing a shield in the Palazzo Communale at Pistoia, described as a work of Verrocchio's *bottega*, dated 1494.

The type in the latter, with curling locks, high cheek-bone and exquisitely modelled cheek, nose aquiline and nostrils curving and slightly dilated, chin rather full and fleshy in the under part of it, and body swaying on the hips with easy swinging grace is very reminiscent of the type of youth in Leonardo's drawings.

Leonardo, perhaps, passed through Pistoia about this time on his way to Florence to consider the construction of the great hall of the Council of which Vasari speaks, and may then have supplied a design. It is somewhat improbable that no local record would have been preserved if he had had any actual share in its execution.

As no authentic work by him in sculpture exists, it is impossible for any work to be attributed to him on purely internal evidence. The comparative test is not available, and it is the essential requisite of connoisseurship.

Of his greatness as a sculptor we have the witness of his contemporaries. No single work of art of the Renais-

sance called forth such tributes of praise as did the model of the Sforza statue during its brief term of existence.

We have also his own testimony in the "Trattato." Comparing the potentialities of sculpture and painting, in giving the preference to the latter, he claims to possess the experience necessary for impartial judgment, having himself "practised the art of sculpture no less than that of painting, and doing both the one and the other in the same degree."¹

¹ R., 655; Ash, i. 25 r.

CHAPTER III

THE RECORDS, 1494-1519

IN Vasari's life of Il Cronaca Leonardo is mentioned as one of a commission appointed to consider the plan of construction of the great hall of the Council in the palace of the Signoria.

The plan agreed upon was carried out by Il Cronaca with great promptitude. The great hall was built in 1495. Leonardo must have visited Florence either in 1494 or at the beginning of 1495. He then met Michelangelo, a youth of nineteen or twenty, who was also one of the commission.

In the disputes which according to Vasari were a constant feature of its meetings, there may have arisen that enmity between the two painters which finds expression in contemporary anecdote.

The visit was of brief duration. In 1495 he was back in Milan at work on a commission in the castle, as is shown by the letter to Ludovic, of this date, of an official, "Filippinus," which is referred to by Professor Uzielli.¹

The fragments of the torn letter² from Leonardo to the Duke conclude by reminding him of the commission to paint the Camerini, which apparently had taken

¹ Uzielli (1896), p. 191.

² C. A., 335 v.

the place of the commission for the statue, and which when the letter was written had also been for some time abandoned.

All that is known of this commission is due to the researches of Dr. Müller-Walde.¹ The result is, however, fragmentary and enigmatic. The rooms were not ready for painting until the close of the year 1495. On November 14th Ambrogio Ferrari wrote of the vaulting of the Camerini that they had received the ground colouring and were then about to be painted. On the 8th of June, 1496, the Duke's secretary, Bartolommeo Calco wrote to the Archbishop of Milan, who was then in Venice, to say that the painter who was painting the Camerini had caused a certain scandal, in consequence of which he had departed, and instructing him if possible to get Perugino to complete the work. The Archbishop's reply was to the effect that Perugino had left Venice six months previously, and the senators knew nothing as to his whereabouts.

In May and November of the following year attempts were made in the Duke's name to obtain the services of Perugino through Guido and Ridolfo Baglioni, the rulers of Perugia. The estrangement between the Duke and the painter of the Camerini, who from the reference in Leonardo's letter must have been Leonardo, had therefore lasted about a year and a half.

The work was resumed in the spring of 1498, and the reports of one of the Duke's officials, Gualtierio, help to establish what was Leonardo's exact share in the work.

On March 22nd, 1498, he wrote: "As to the work upon

¹ M.-W., *Bei.*, I., in *Jahrbuch*, 1897.

the vaulted ceiling no time is being lost, so that I believe the masters will fulfil the promises they have made."

On April 20th: "In the Saletta Negra it has been carried out as your Excellency commanded. Not only is the festoon painted on the wall, but when a part of it was painted the measurements were all changed by agreement of Messer Ambrogio with the master Leonardo, with result that it looks very well, and no time will be lost in finishing it."

On April 21st: "In the Saletta Negra no time will be lost. On Monday the large Camera delle 'asse,' *i.e.*, the Camera della Torre will be stripped. The master Leonardo promises to finish it in September."

On April 23rd: "The large Camera delle 'asse' is stripped, and in the Camerino no time is being lost."

The last two extracts offer substantial reason for inference that the Saletta Negra is the same as the Camerino, *i.e.*, it is according to Dr. Müller-Walde the larger of the two Camerini on the right of the Camera della Torre, which had received the ground colouring and were ready for painting in November, 1495.

The mention of Leonardo's name in the despatch of April 20th with regard to the room is in the character of an adviser. In that of the following day he is more closely associated with the decoration of the Camera della Torre. This room has recently been completely restored in accordance with the original scheme. The design is entirely novel and effective. The trunks of trees are represented at regular spaces round the walls, and the branches spread out in arched leafy bowers upon the vaulted roof, and woven among them is a network of interlacing coils of rope with one of the recurrent patterns



[Alinari photo]

[Uffizi Gallery, Florence]

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI

of the "intrecciamenti" which had a strange fascination for Leonardo as is shown by their repetition on corners where apparently the pen has played on pages of the Codice Atlantico, on the border of the dress of Mona Lisa, and on the "Cartelli," inscribed, "Leonardi Academia Vici," which inscription I believe to have been as remote from anything of actual existence as is the scroll which encircles it.

The scheme of decoration of the Camera della Torre is the only work now visible in the Castle of Milan of which the design can be attributed to Leonardo. There is a preparatory study for it in a sheet of "intrecciamenti" in the Codice Atlantico (261 r. a) in which the arrangement of the coils looped round open spaces is almost exactly similar to that on the ceiling. Gualtierio's despatches refer only to the larger of the two Camerini, the Saletta Negra, and only mention Leonardo's presence there in association with others.

The eight *Amorini* discovered in 1893 in fresco, on the vaulting of the smaller of the two Camerini which is at the end of the passage from the Sala Verde, are not assigned to him by any documentary evidence, and it seems to me quite impossible to attribute them to him on internal grounds. They are utterly lacking in the delicacy of line which is the inherent quality of his work. They seem to be later productions of the Milanese school.

Similarly it is impossible to accept the colossal figure of Mercury or Argus in the Sala del Tesoro as a work by Leonardo. The destruction of the head renders the question of its authorship somewhat conjectural and relatively unimportant, but it may be compared with the *Uomo dello Spadone*, Brera (532), and the other frescoes from the

Sala dei Baroni of the Casa Prinetti which are attributed to Bramante. It is entirely like them in the rigidity and curiously overwrought tension of muscle which seem to show the hand of one accustomed to produce his effects with materials less pliant than are those of the painter.

There is no evidence that Leonardo ever executed any figure composition in the castle. Whatever he was engaged upon in 1496 was put an end to by the quarrel with the Duke. In 1498 he does not seem to have done more than devise schemes of decoration.

In the intervening period he was occupied with the painting of the *Last Supper*. The Duke had apparently a voice in the agreement, and his resentment against the painter is clearly indicated by the terms of a memorandum to his secretary, Marchesino Stanga, of June 29th, 1497: "to urge Leonardo* the Florentine to finish the work in the Refectory of the Grazie which he has begun, so that he may then get to work upon the opposite wall of the said Refectory, and to go through with him the articles of the agreement which he has signed, which oblige him to complete it in the time which has been specified."

This agreement has disappeared; the chronological records of the commission for the *Last Supper* consist in this memorandum, and in an entry dated 1497 in a book of notes by the architect of the Convent of a payment for making a window in the Refectory "where Leonardo was painting the Apostles." The terms of Fra Luca Pacioli's reference in the dedication of "De Divina Proportione" are such as to show that it was then, *i.e.*, on February 9th, 1498, on the point of completion if not actually completed.



Alinari photo

[Uffizi Gallery, Florence]

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI
(DETAIL)

The reference to work to be undertaken by Leonardo on the opposite wall of the Refectory must be to the portraits of the Sforza family painted at either side of the fresco of the Crucifixion by Montorfano. The fresco was completed and signed in 1495. The portraits are the addition of a later hand. Both Vasari and Lomazzo ascribe them to Leonardo, the former stating that they were painted when he was at work on the Cenacolo.

The Padre Gattico, in his MS. history of the Convent, says that Leonardo undertook the portraits unwillingly, painting them in oils at the insistence of the Duke against his own judgment: at the beginning of the seventeenth century, when the Padre wrote, they had already decayed away.¹

Bossi holds them to have been in execution the work of a pupil, which would be the natural upshot of Leonardo's reluctance to blend his work with that of the older painter.

The ruin of the figures is so complete that it is impossible to judge of their original condition, but the vestiges that remain have no suggestion of Leonardo. Colour and modelling have disappeared. The miniature-like elaboration of detail of the Duchess's brocaded robe, the dwarf-like children, the stiff angularity of outline, suggest that the painter belonged to the earlier Lombard School before becoming Leonardo's assistant. The grouping of the four figures and such details as are still visible resemble the portraits in the Brera altar-piece attributed formerly to Zenale, then by Morelli to Bernardino de' Conti, and now described officially, as "a picture of

¹ Uzielli (1896), p. 192.

the transition from the old Lombard School to that of Leonardo."

Ludovic's memorandum only shows that he wished Leonardo to undertake the work. There were some steps between this and performance.

Did Leonardo, then, ever paint the portraits either of Ludovic or Beatrice d'Este? All the answer possible is that there is no documentary evidence of his having done so, and there is no portrait of either in existence in the better-known collections which can be accepted as his work. Whoever the profile portrait in the Ambrosiana may represent—whether a princess of the house of Sforza or no—it is certainly not the work of Leonardo, but of Ambrogio de Predis, as Morelli has shown by examination of characteristic details.

That Leonardo never painted Beatrice d'Este, or that at any rate no such picture existed in Milan a year after her death, is also to be inferred from the fact that in 1497 her sister Isabella, desiring to see some specimen of Leonardo's art, wrote to Cecilia Gallerani for the loan of her portrait. This suggests a possible reason why the picture of Beatrice never was painted. Leonardo painted Cecilia Gallerani and Lucrezia Crivelli. The young Duchess, who, as the Ferrarese orator reported to his master, refused to wear a vest of woven gold, the gift of her husband, if Cecilia Gallerani ever wore a similar one which the Duke had given her, saw in Leonardo the painter of her husband's mistresses.

These two portraits are the only other compositions dating from the period of his residence in Milan to which contemporary documents refer, except the commission for the monks of S. Francesco, which is the subject of an



Anderson photo

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI

(DETAIL)

[*Uffizi Gallery, Florence*]

undated petition to the Duke discussed further on in relation to the picture.

In response to the request of the Marchioness Isabella, Cecilia Gallerani, who had been married to Count Bergamini, sent her portrait to Mantua with a prettily worded letter, saying that she would send it with even greater pleasure if it were more like her, begging the Marchioness, however, not to suppose that this is the fault of the master, for indeed she does not think that there lives his equal in the world, but the portrait was painted when she was quite young, and since then she has changed so much in features that no one would recognize that it was meant for her.¹ The letter is dated April 29th, 1498. The picture must have been painted previously to September, 1492, the year of the death of Bernardo Bellincioni, who has described it in a sonnet, "Sopra il retratto de Madona Cecilia qual fece Maestro Leonardo."

Ludovic's connection with Cecilia had already commenced in 1481, when he gave her an estate at Saronno. From her reference to the age at which the portrait was painted, it must have been that Leonardo made it very soon after his arrival in Milan. She was represented, tradition says, playing a cithern, and Amoretti considered as a copy of Leonardo's picture the *Suonatrice di liuto* in the Ambrosiana, which is, however, a copy of an original by Bartolommeo Veneto now in the possession of Count Cesare del Mayno at Milan. Bellincioni's sonnet says nothing of the cithern, and the tradition may be disregarded.

Lucrezia Crivelli was one of the Duchess's ladies-in-waiting. The annalists first mention the *liaison* in 1496.

¹ Uzielli (1896), p. 291.

An estate was settled upon her in the following year, and about this time presumably the portrait was painted. It is the subject of three epigrams,¹ probably sent to Leonardo by an admirer of the picture. The second recites the essential facts :

Hujus quam cernis nomen Lucretia, Divi
 Omnia cui larga contribuere manu.
 Rara huic forma data est ; pinxit Leonardus, amavit
 Maurus, pictorum primus hic, ille ducum.

The picture in the Louvre, *A Portrait of a Woman*, No. 1600, to which the title *La Belle Ferronnière* was for a time transferred from another picture, has been identified with the portrait of Lucrezia Crivelli. The attribution is a pure hypothesis, resting upon no evidence of any kind. I believe the picture to be, as Dr. Frizzoni considers it, the work of Boltraffio, whose *Madonna of the Casio Family* hangs on the same wall.

Of the portraits of Lucrezia Crivelli and Cecilia Gallerani record ceases at the outset.

In thus attempting to portray the life of the artist at the Milanese Court as recorded in contemporary documents, I have only alluded to political events in so far as they directly affected particular commissions upon which he was engaged. Only to this extent did they in any way enter into his life. The whole contents of his MSS. show that he viewed every phase of the natural history of mankind with more curiosity than he did the vicissitudes of political association.

"The knowledge," he says, "of past time and of the

¹ C. A., 167 v. ; R., 1560.

position of the earth both adorns and nourishes the human mind.”¹

But it is concerning the life of man in relation to nature that he sought this knowledge. He was a type of the artist in that he had no confines of country. Except when constrained in the Duke's service, his presence is not recorded at any Court function.

With the sycophantic cluster of *literati* and *virtuosi* he kept no fellowship. He lived as he counselled others in the “Trattato.” The artist must be solitary in order to be himself, “Se tu sarai solo tu sarai tutto tuo.”² If this be impossible, if the artist must have companionship—there is a world of meaning in the parenthesis—then let him find it in his studio. So he passed through a world of human relationships and contests of place and power, alone with the visions of the brain, ever the artist striving to create, the student striving to know. The tangle of political embarrassments was at once his opportunity and the rock on which his hopes were wrecked.

A line of the torn letter³ reminding the Duke “of my small matters and the arts put to silence,” utters his hopes: “works of fame by which I could show to those who shall behold them that I have been.” The purpose was dominant, the location only the fleeting opportunity. So he passed from the service of the Medici to that of the Sforzas, of Caesar Borgia, of the Signoria, and finally of the Kings of France. The latest record of his association with his old patron is in April 1499, when he was given the grant of a vineyard near the Porta Vercellina.

In September of the same year the Duke fled from Milan four days before the French entered. There is a

¹ C. A., 365 v.

² Ash. I.; R., 494.

³ C. A., 335 v.

strange impassivity in Leonardo's comment on his patron's fallen fortunes, written after his final defeat at Novara in April of the following year: "The Duke has lost his State, his possessions and his liberty, and not one of his works has been completed."¹

Leonardo remained in Milan as late as December 14th, when he sent to Florence certain moneys by Milanese bankers. Soon afterwards he set out with Fra Luca Pacioli, proceeding first to Mantua then to Venice.

With the departure from Milan commenced the Odyssey of wanderings which with brief intermission continued for the remainder of his life. For the last portion of it the records of his movements are very fragmentary. Only for a few years in Florence was he at all continuously at work on artistic commissions. The time of high confidence which had produced the first letter to Ludovic was over.

He went first to Mantua. He had already paid a brief visit there in December, 1498, for the Marquis in a letter² to his treasurer of that date instructs him to pay Leonardo for the lute and viol strings which he had brought with him from Milan. Had the portrait of Cecilia Gallerani, which had been sent to her in April, instilled into Isabella d'Este the desire to be painted by Leonardo? At the visit in December the wish would doubtless be expressed, and a year later, when the painter left Milan, he betook himself to Mantua and stayed long enough to make a sketch and a promise. The Marchioness wrote to him with reproach five years later (May 14th, 1504):³ "When

¹ R., 1414; MSS. of the Inst. L. (*verso* of cover).

² Quoted in Cartwright, "Isabella d'Este," i., p. 171.

³ Luzio, "I Precettori," etc., p. 34.



New Gallery Portfolio]

[Royal Library, Windsor

STUDY OF HANDS

you were in this country and drew our portrait in chalk you promised you would one day paint our picture in colours."

He made a replica of the sketch, and leaving one with the Marchioness, took the other with him to Venice to serve as cartoon for the picture. There it was seen by the maker of musical instruments, Lorenzo Gusnasco da Pavia, who wrote enthusiastically to Isabella on March 13th, 1500, that it was extremely life-like and incredibly well done. A year later she appealed to Leonardo to send her a copy of the cartoon because her husband had given away the one which he had left at Mantua.

In letters to the painter and to intermediaries in Florence from 1501 to 1506 the Marchioness, gradually giving up hope of ever getting her portrait, tried to get some small picture from him, suggesting "a little picture of the Madonna full of faith and sweetness, just as his nature would enable him to conceive her"; and again, that "after his labours on Florentine history for the Signoria, a figure of the Child Christ would be quite a relaxation." But Leonardo, despite all persuasion, did no more than make promises. The replies of her correspondents, Fra Pietro da Nuvolaria and Angelo del Tovaglia present a detailed record of his commissions during these years.¹

The portrait in crayons of Isabella d'Este in the Louvre is probably that which Leonardo made at Mantua and took with him to serve as cartoon for the picture, the latter inference arising from the fact of its being pricked for transfer. The comparison with medals and with

¹ Luzio, "I Precettori," etc., and "Arch. Stor. dell' Arte," 1888, p. 181.

Titian's portrait of Isabella d'Este leaves no room for doubt as to the identity of subject. The bright animation, the wit and vivacity of the face in the sketch render it the most characteristic representation of one who in *esprit* was the foremost lady of the Italian Renaissance. Had the picture ever been painted, the cartoon suggests that it would have been a *spirituelle* sister to the Mona Lisa.

From Mantua he went with Pacioli to Venice, writing there a few notes of the names of people he met, and an observation as to the amount of tide on the Adriatic.

The Duke had reoccupied Milan in February, 1500, with an army of Germans and Swiss, but he was defeated and taken prisoner on the 10th of April, and probably the movements of the two friends turned on the issue of the battle, for they seem to have left Venice immediately afterwards and were at Florence by April 24th, at which date Leonardo drew out money from his account at the Hospital of S. Maria Nuova.¹

Nearly two decades had elapsed since his first departure to Milan. The interval of time had effected an almost complete change in the art world of Florence. Verrocchio, the Pollaiuoli, and Ghirlandaio had died. Botticelli and Lorenzo di Credi had joined the followers of Savonarola, and after the Friar's death in 1498 the former had almost entirely given up painting. Baccio della Porta entered the Dominican Order as Fra Bartolommeo in 1500, and for four years, according to Vasari, abstained altogether from painting. Of the band of artists who in the time of Lorenzo de' Medici were foremost in executing commissions, only Filippino Lippi was still at work in Florence when Leonardo returned. The star of Michelangelo had

¹ Uzielli (1872), Doc. X.



Alinari photo]

[Accademia, Venice

HEAD OF CHRIST, CROWNED WITH THORNS

arisen, and his name alone went far to redress the balance of the loss. But for five years from 1496 Michelangelo was absent from Florence, residing mainly in Rome.

Whatever position Leonardo had attained in the estimation of his compatriots before his departure for Milan, he must have returned with greater prestige as the artist of the *Last Supper* and of the model for the Sforza statue. This may be inferred from Vasari's statement that Filippino Lippi retired in his favour from a commission for the Servite monks, and that when his cartoon for the *Madonna with S. Anne* was finished, not only the artists, but all Florence came to see it, in "a concourse such as one sees flocking to the most solemn festivals." Fra Pietro da Nuvolaria's description of the cartoon in a letter to Isabella d'Este of April 3rd, 1501, it being then not quite completed, proves it to have been one of the earliest, if not the earliest, of the commissions undertaken after his return to Florence. The letter expressly states that he had done nothing else. But at about this time he must have commenced the portrait of Madonna Lisa, wife of Francesco del Giocondo, on which, according to Vasari, he was engaged for four years. Of this commission there is no precise evidence of date or document. Assuming, however, that Vasari's testimony as to the time spent on it is as correct, say, as that of Sabba da Castiglione of the sixteen years spent on the Sforza statue, the commission must have been given to him very soon after his arrival in Florence, and Milanese even places it in the year 1500.

Another letter¹ from Fra Pietro to Isabella d'Este states that he is busy with a small picture for Robertet,

¹ Calvi, "Notizie," etc. (1869).

the Secretary of the King of France, in which the Madonna was represented disentangling her spindles, and the Child has laid hold of the winder and is looking intently at the four spokes, which form a cross.

There is a curious emphasis in a sentence repeated in Fra Pietro's letters, which is somewhat inconsistent with their descriptions of the pictures upon which he was occupied. "He is entirely devoted to Geometry, and is very impatient of painting." "His mathematical studies have so estranged him from painting that he cannot endure to use a brush."

In spite of the commissions which awaited him in Florence, he was impatient of painting. He never shared the artist's complete absorption. He had always, in thought at any rate, wandered between the two worlds. Florence awaited Leonardo the artist, but for the scientist, the theorist, the constructor, the path led elsewhither. He was in Florence in July, 1501, when he gave a receipt for the rent of his vineyard outside the Porta Vercellini at Milan, and was seen by Manfredo de' Manfredi on behalf of Isabella d'Este, and in March of the following year he was consulted by Francesco Malatesta as to the value of certain vases which the Marchioness desired to purchase. Soon afterwards records show him to be in the service of Caesar Borgia as military engineer, inspecting the fortresses of Romagna. He may have seen Caesar Borgia when the Duke entered Milan with Louis XII., in September, 1499. Alvisi conjectures that he was in the Duke's camp shortly before the surrender of Faenza, in April, 1501, which I find difficult to reconcile with the evidence of his presence in Florence, though it is not impossible that he went and returned. The two historians

of Caesar Borgia suggest that he was engaged in his service in the autumn of 1501. But of such notes in his MSS. as relate to places visited in the tour, the six which are dated are between July 30th, 1502, and September 6th, 1502. He had, therefore, commenced upon the duties of his office before the issue of the patent of authority by Caesar Borgia to facilitate his progress.¹

"Caesar Borgia of France, by the Grace of God Duke of Romagna, etc. . . .

"To all our lieutenants, castellans, captains, condottieri, officials, soldiers and subjects hereafter cognisant of this decree, we constrain and command, that to the bearer, our most excellent and well beloved servant, Architect and Engineer-in-Chief, Leonardo Vinci,—whom we have appointed to inspect strongholds and fortresses in our dominions, to the end that according to their need and to his counsel we may be enabled to provide for their necessities,—they afford a passage absolutely free from any toll or tax, a friendly welcome both for himself and his company, freedom to see, examine and take measurements precisely as he may wish, and for this purpose assistance in men as many as he may desire, and all possible aid, assistance and favour, it being our will that in the carrying out of any works in our dominions every engineer shall be bound to confer with him and to follow his advice.

"Given at Paris 18 August, 1502."

This alone gives the touch of reality to the whole episode. Notes made during his journey are on "the dovecot and the palace steps of Urbino," "the bell of Siena," "the library of Pesaro," "the harmony of the falling water at the fountain at Rimini," "the breaking of the wave upon the shore, as observed at Piombino," and the laws

¹ Alvisi, "Cesare Borgia," p. 537.

which govern it; "each place," in Pater's words, "appearing as fitfully as in a fever dream."

More germane to the duties of his position are the notes on the rock of Cesena, on the necessity for bastions for the tower of Porto Cesenatico, the ground-plan of the fortress of Urbino, the statements of the distances between the various towns of Romagna, and the maps of central Italy, indicating with extreme precision towns, rivers and the configuration of the mountains.

There are fewer references in his MSS. to the duties of his office under Caesar Borgia than are contained in the reports ostensibly written from Syria of the not dissimilar position of their writer, but in the former case the text of Caesar Borgia's decree suffices to set conjecture at rest. He may have been the architect in the Duke's service who in August, 1502, made a plan for a navigable canal between Cesena and Porto Cesenatico. His notes show that he went as far south as Orvieto, and he may possibly have visited Rome at this time, but there is no record of his having done so. His term of service was of brief duration, as was that of Caesar Borgia's actual rule in his duchy. The rebellion which occurred in October, 1502, and occupied the Duke until his departure for Rome in the following January, would make the inspecting of fortresses an impossibility.

Leonardo was back in Florence in the spring of 1503. On March 4th he drew from his account at the Hospital of S. Maria Nuova. On the 23rd of July, 1503, he went in the service of the Signoria to the Florentine camp before Pisa, to study how to divert the course of the Arno, and so cut off the access to Pisa from the sea.¹

¹ Milanese, "Documenti Inediti," etc., iii.



In January, 1504, he was one of a commission of artists called upon to advise the Signoria as to where to place Michelangelo's statue of *David*. His opinion was in agreement with that of Giuliano da San Gallo, that it should be in the Loggia. The position finally chosen was that in front of the Palazzo suggested by Michelangelo himself. It is easy to attach undue significance to these incidents. Suffice it to say that alike in record and tradition, a difference of opinion occurred on each of the occasions wherein the two artists were found in association.

Already, before the conference about the *David*, they had been allotted the commissions for the Sala del Consiglio of the Palazzo della Signoria. On opposite walls each was to paint a subject chosen from the military annals of the Republic. Michelangelo's choice was of an incident in one of the wars against Pisa, in which a group of Pisans, while bathing, were surprised by the Florentines. Leonardo chose a combat between the Florentine troops and the Milanese under the command of Niccolò Piccinino which took place at Anghiari in 1440. Neither incident had been of any real importance. The choice made by Michelangelo seems rather to have been dictated by the superior plastic possibilities in the representation of a group of nudes which appealed more to the artist than would any attempt to glorify the arms of the State. Anghiari was an insignificant skirmish, though it appears as an affair of considerably greater dimensions in the description, probably drawn up by order of the Signoria to serve the painter as a memorandum of the events of the battle.¹ Of this, however, he

¹ C. A., 74 r. and v., R., 669.

made very little use. The degree of historical importance of the event, alike with the sequence of incident, the personages present, and the spectacle of the generals addressing their troops were all secondary to his intent. It served as a supreme representation of combat. The particular is lost in the type. He describes war in his MSS. as a bestial frenzy. The wonderful description in the Trattato, "On the Way of Representing a Battle,"¹ seeks to build up the whole effect by following it in its action on each detail down to the whirl of the dust and the agony of the fallen. It might serve as a description—it is in many details an actual description—of the composition, as we can judge of it from the drawings at Venice, and that by Rubens in the Louvre. In place of the pageantry of the battle-piece of Paolo Uccello and Piero de' Franceschi, he gives tension of muscle charged with passion to bursting point, and utmost fury of horse and rider.

It ranks as the third great commission of his artistic life, the one by which alone he seemed to reveal to contemporary Florence the full measure of his genius. "As long as the two existed," says Benvenuto Cellini of Leonardo's and Michelangelo's cartoons, "they were the school of the world."

The issue of the fight according to the narration turned on the possession of a bridge held by the Florentines, captured and recaptured by desperate charges. This is apparently the part of the field he has chosen. In one of the drawings at Venice² the bridge is represented in the background to the right. Beside it is the group of four horsemen fighting for a standard, which two have seized

¹ R., 601, 602.

² R., Pl. LIII.



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New Gallery Portfolio

[Royal Library, Windsor]

STUDY FOR THE TRIVULZIO MONUMENT

and are endeavouring to wrest from a third. The fury of the combat has spread from the men to the horses.

This group figured in the foreground of the composition, and the evidence of the "Anonimo Fiorentino," and the fact that it alone is the subject of such copies as presumably derive their origin from the picture, render it probable that it was the only part of the composition painted in colour on the wall. Dr. Richter has pointed out the only sure ground in the attempt to reconstitute the cartoon from existing drawings. Raphael made a hurried sketch of the *Battle of the Standard*, now in the University Galleries at Oxford. In this drawing another horse is visible above the group. The attitude exactly recurs in a drawing at Windsor,¹ a copy of part of the cartoon made by Cesare da Sesto. In the Windsor drawing a company of horsemen are represented to the right of this figure, advancing with lances raised and streaming pennons. This company presumably formed the right middle background of the original cartoon. Drawings of horsemen and foot-soldiers at Windsor, at the Uffizi, at Venice, and at the British Museum, were probably studies for other parts of the cartoon, but it is not possible to locate the groups.

The dire stress of combat of the central group fighting for the Standard, and the vigour of its execution are best surmised from the drawing by Rubens in coloured chalk in the Louvre, although this can only have been a copy of a copy of the original.

A drawing in pen and bistre, tinted, in the British Museum² is an early copy of the horse and rider on the right hand of the group. There are also early copies of the

¹ R., LVII.

² Malcolm, Add. I

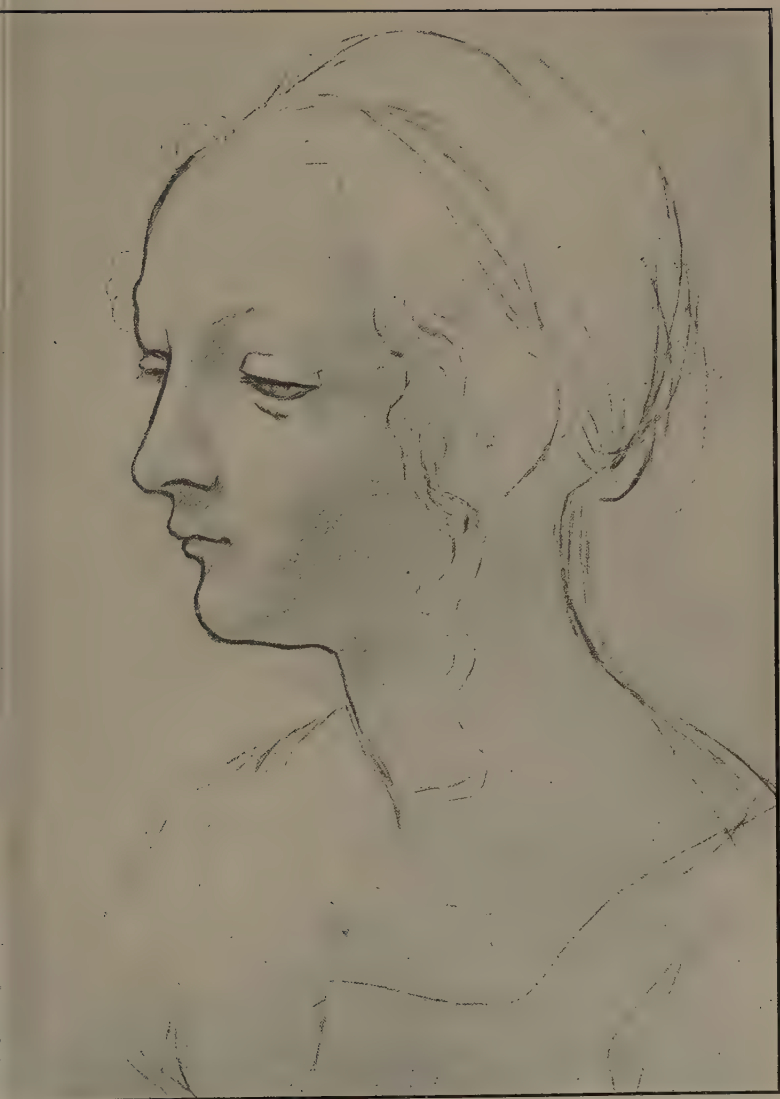
group in the Dépôt of the Uffizi and in the possession of Madame Timbal, at Paris, and Mr. H. P. Horne, with which I am not acquainted.

There are original studies for the heads of three of the group of combatants at Buda-Pesth. On the same sheet are drawings in black chalk of the face furthest from the spectator, and the head of the figure with raised scimitar, seen almost full, with open mouth and face drawn with frenzy. A red chalk study of the head of the horseman on the right, in the same collection,¹ equals—nay, even surpasses—it in dramatic intensity.

To these Mr. Berenson and M. Müntz add as a study for the head of a combatant in some other part of the picture the red chalk drawing at Windsor of the head of a young man seen almost full face, starting back with open mouth and eyes staring. I believe this drawing to be a study for the figure of S. James the Greater in the *Last Supper*, whom Goethe characterizes as "drawing back with terror, gazing with head bent down as one who imagines that he sees before him the horror that he hears." The pose of the head, the open mouth, the eyes staring at something in the near foreground, have on any other hypothesis a very extraordinary similarity in effect. That the position of the body is the same would follow from the faintly indicated line of the tunic in the drawing corresponding exactly to that in the picture. The architectural drawing on the same sheet helps the supposition that the sketch was made at Milan, for to the period of his residence there must be assigned the great majority of his architectural sketches.

Leonardo worked on the cartoon in the Sala del Papa

¹ R., I. p. 339.



New Gallery Portfolio

[Royal Library, Windsor]

STUDY OF A HEAD

at S. Maria Novella. Records printed by Gaye and Milanesi show the cost of materials and the precise stages of its progress, starting with the decision of the Signoria on the 24th of October, 1503, to give him the key of the room. On the 8th of the following January is a note of the supply of wood in the said chamber, presumably to make a stage "*circa picturam fiendam per Leonardum de Vincio pro palatio dictorum dominorum.*"

The definite contract was apparently not made until the 4th of May, 1504, when the Council of the Signoria decided that by the following February the cartoon ought to be completed, that they would pay Leonardo 15 gold florins per month, reserving to themselves the power to compel him to restore his salary and abandon the work if it were not completed within the time stipulated, but that if in the meantime he should think fit to paint upon the wall the portion of the cartoon which he had completed, they would pay him a proper salary for so doing and would prolong the specified period within which the cartoon should be completed. But Leonardo for once was punctual. On the 28th of February, 1505, he had completed the cartoon, and a note provides for the erection of the scaffolding in the Sala del Consiglio. The records of regular payments for materials up to the end of October show that he worked for eight months upon the picture. Why the progress of the work was then interrupted is to be inferred from the early biographers. Paolo Giovio and Vasari say that he painted in oil and that the plaster was too coarse to hold the colour. According to the "Anonimo Fiorentino" the plaster was made after a receipt of Pliny's which Leonardo did not properly understand. He tried it on the wall of the Sala del Papa and

lit a large charcoal fire, and the heat dried it properly. But when he came to try it on the wall of the Sala del Consiglio, the heat of the fire was only sufficient to dry the plaster of the lower part of the wall; the upper part was too far away to be affected by its action, and consequently did not set.

The interruption was only temporary; Leonardo was in the service of the Signoria preparing to execute the picture, when, in May, 1506, de Chaumont, who was governor of Milan for the French, sent a request that the artist should go there to do a certain work for him. The Signoria granted him three months' leave of absence from the end of May, he giving surety in 150 florins for his return. However, shortly before the expiration of the term, both de Chaumont and the Vice-Chancellor Jafredo Caroli wrote to the Signoria asking for the extension of Leonardo's leave of absence until at any rate the end of September.¹ The Signoria, not venturing to offend the ministers of Louis XII., acceded to their request in a letter of August 28th,² resentment accounting perhaps for a statement in it which their own records show to be incorrect, viz., that if Leonardo wishes to remain away for a still longer time, he can do so if he return the money paid him for the work which he has not commenced. On the 9th of October,³ in response apparently to another application, Piero Soderini wrote urging that a date be fixed, and that there be no more requests for extension "for Leonardo has not behaved properly to the Republic, having received a considerable sum of money and made

¹ Gaye, vol. ii., XXXII. and XXXIII.

² Vasari, edit. Milanese.

³ Gaye, ii., XXXIV.

but a small beginning to a great work which he is under contract to do."

However, in the following January, in response to letters¹ from the French King and the Florentine ambassador, Francesco Pandolfini, the Signoria acceded to the King's wish to allow Leonardo to remain in Milan until he came to Italy; and even expressed their pleasure that Leonardo should do the will of the King. The King's desire, says Pandolfini, in his letter, has been awakened by the sight of a small picture by him; and the works which he wished to obtain from the artist were "certain small panel pictures of the Madonna, and others as the mood shall take me, and perhaps my portrait."

What pictures he painted either for de Chaumont or for Louis have disappeared without record; but the King entered Milan on the 24th of May, and Leonardo remained there until September, when private affairs necessitated his presence in Florence.

His father, Ser Piero da Vinci, had died, as he records in a note in the manuscripts, on July 9th, 1504, apparently intestate, and the seven legitimate sons had divided the inheritance. Since then his uncle, Francesco, had died leaving him by his will a share in his estate. His brothers attempted to set aside the will. Leonardo, therefore, returned to Florence in September to have the case tried. His coming was preceded by letters² from Louis XII. and de Chaumont to the Signoria, urging them to see that the lawsuit was settled with all possible despatch and fairness. The King's letter, which was dated July 25th, speaks of "nostre chier et bien amé Léonard da

¹ Gaye, ii., XXXIX. and XL.

² Uzielli (1872), Doc. XIV. and XVI.

Vincy, nostre paintre et ingénieur ordinaire." That of de Chaumont of August 15th refers to him as painter to the Most Christian King, and says with what reluctance they are allowing him to depart, for he is under contract to paint a picture for His Majesty.

After arriving in Florence Leonardo wrote, on September 18th, to Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, to entreat him to exercise his influence with one of the members of the Signoria, before whom the case was being tried, so that he might receive justice, and that as speedily as possible.¹

Autres temps, autres mœurs—but the law's delays at any rate afford a thread of continuity. The case lasted six months. In a letter written to de Chaumont, at some time in the following spring, he says:² "I am almost at the end of the litigation with my brothers, and I hope to be with you at Easter, and to bring with me two pictures of the Madonna, differing in size. They were made either for the Most Christian King or for whomsoever else your Lordship pleases." He would be glad also to know where he is to reside, and whether, as he has been working for the Most Christian King, his salary is to continue or no.

He did not resume work in the Sala del Consiglio. He had passed into the service of the King of France and his ministers, and the *Battle of Anghiari* remained a fragment.

The resentment revealed in the letters of the Signoria was not unnatural. It may at any rate be urged in extenuation that Leonardo's position was one of extreme difficulty. The propitiation of the French was the first political principle of the Signoria. They were at the same

¹ R., 1348.

² C. A., 317 r., R., 1349.

time desirous of obtaining the consideration which would accrue from freely placing Leonardo's services at the King's disposal, and indignant because he was thus perforce absent from the work in Florence. To the charge of bad faith Leonardo's reply was to induce friends to offer to restore to the Signoria all the money he had received.

He postulated in the "Trattato" for the artist a life quiet, uneventful, passed in his studio. His own had become a shuttlecock, driven by the capricious wind of political fortune. To its urgency was due in great measure the fact that his last great commission was abandoned in mid-effort.

Of the fate of the Cartoon nothing is known beyond a statement by the "Anonimo Fiorentino" that when Leonardo went to France, in the service of Francis I., *i.e.* in 1516, he left the *greater part of it* in charge of the Hospital of S. Maria Nuova.

The painting in the Sala del Consiglio is mentioned in 1510 in Albertini, "Memoriale": "li cavalli di Leonardo Vinci, et li disegni di Michelangelo."

There is a record of money paid on April 13th, 1513, to a carpenter for putting boards "to protect the figures painted by Leonardo da Vinci in the Great Hall."¹

The "Anonimo Fiorentino," writing between 1542 and 1548, spoke of the group of horses as "to-day visible in execution." Mr. H. P. Horne quotes from a letter by Anton Francesco Doni, dated August 17th, 1549,² enumerating to a friend, among the sights of Florence, in the Sala Grande, "a group of horses and men (a portion

¹ Vasari, edit. Milanesei.

² Bottari, G., "Raccolta di Lettere sulla Pittura," etc., 1754, vol. iii., p. 234.

of the battle of Leonardo da Vinci) that will appear a miraculous thing to you."

Within little more than twenty years from this date the walls of the Sala del Consiglio had been covered with frescoes by Vasari. It would appear that what remained of Leonardo's painting was destroyed to make way for them. Vasari's vivid description of the group adds one to the number of the combatants. He is silent as to its history in the much-revised second edition of 1568, although in the interval between the two editions the destruction had almost certainly taken place.

The letter to de Chaumont makes mention of two Madonna pictures, painted in Florence, which he intended to take back with him to Milan. One of these was probably the picture for which there is a study in the Louvre of the head of the Virgin.¹ Copies exist in the Poldi Pezzoli Gallery at Milan and the *Litta Madonna* at the Hermitage.

Mr. H. P. Horne has pointed out the existence of studies for the head, hand and foot of the child in reverse, in the British Museum MS.,² which, as the opening lines state was "begun in Florence in the house of Piero di Braccio Martelli on the 22nd day of March, 1508." This is very near to the presumed date of the letter to de Chaumont, which speaks of being back by Easter.

The King in his letter to the Signoria spoke of Leonardo as "our painter and engineer in ordinary." It is to his work in the latter capacity that evidence chiefly relates. He had been given by the King the right to take twelve inches of water from the canal at S. Cristoforo,

¹ Vallardi, 2376.

² Arundel 263, folio 253 v. and 256 r.



Philpot photo]

[Royal Library, Turin

STUDY FOR THE ANGEL IN THE "VIRGIN
OF THE ROCKS"

Plate 18

but owing to the dearth of water in the canal the grant had not taken effect before his return to Florence. A letter to the President of the Commission for Canals, asking to be put in possession of his right, is of the same date as that to de Chaumont ending with a request for his influence in the matter of the water, "because on my return I hope to make there instruments and things which will be of great pleasure to our Most Christian King." The reference is apparently to some mechanism for regulating the flow of water.

A note, with diagram, in the MSS. of the Institut,¹ of "the conduit in the garden of Blois made in France by Fra Giocondo," may be cited in this connection. The MS. is of date later than 1504. The wording of the note suggests that it was not written in France.

Louis XII. apparently consulted Leonardo as to the plan of irrigation of the royal château.

He was again occupied upon the construction of hydraulic works in Lombardy. In the MSS. of the Institut F, "commenced at Milan on the 12th day of September, 1508," is a note,² "how to remedy the effect of the diminution of water in the Adda, caused by making the Martesana canal." To render the canal navigable from Milan to Como necessitated the cutting of a canal between Trezzo and Brivio, of six and a half miles with two locks. Notes and plans in section for this work are in the Codice Atlantico.³

On May 3rd, 1509, he records the completion of a reservoir which he had made in the canal of S. Cristoforo.

The triumphal entry of Louis XII. into Milan in July, 1509, after the victory of Agnadello, recalled him

¹ R., 1073.

² Fol. 76 v.

³ R., 1012. C. A., 141 v.

to more picturesque avocations. Then, probably, as part of the pageantry, he constructed the automatic lion which Vasari and Lomazzo tell of. There is a sketch of the creature on the same sheet as a chalk drawing for the right hand of the Louvre *S. John*.¹

Louis brought with him French artists and poets.
Their verses rang with Leonardo's praise,

Léonard qui a grâces supernes.

It would seem that the Sforza days were born anew and that another hand had taken up Bellincioni's lyre.

His manuscripts show his intercourse with the French artists. We may cite the note in the Codice Atlantico, "get from Jean de Paris the method of painting in tempera, . . ."² which weakens the supposition that Leonardo never painted except in oils.

The fresco of the *Madonnone* in the Villa Melzi at Vaprio, traditionally ascribed to Leonardo and Francesco Melzi, but which Morelli and Dr. Frizzoni give to Sodoma, is certainly not the work of Leonardo, but the composition seems to me to suggest his immediate influence. A drawing of his first Florentine period might have been used for the Child, so strong the analogy to that in the *Adoration*. The standard fell away as the work proceeded. Possibly Melzi may have painted it under the eye of Leonardo during one of his frequent visits to Vaprio.

This was also the time of Leonardo's intercourse with Marc Antonio della Torre, Professor of Anatomy at Pavia. A note in the Windsor MSS. runs: "This winter of 1510 I hope to finish all this anatomy."

¹ C. A., 179 r.

² C. A., 247 r.



New Gallery Portfolio]

[Royal Library, Windsor

STUDY FOR THE INFANT CHRIST IN "THE
VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS "

Plate 19

In October, 1510, his name appears as one of a commission appointed to advise on the construction of the choir stalls in the cathedral. There was no great artistic work, but otherwise he seems to have taken up again almost the same threads of activity in this second period of residence at Milan. It ended by a turn of the wheel of political fortune. The French hold on Lombardy, weakened by the death of de Chaumont in March, 1511, ceased altogether on the death of Gaston de Foix at Ravenna in April, 1512, and in June Maximilian Sforza, supported by a coalition of Spain, the Pope and Venice, re-entered Milan.

The old indifference to the trend of political events, which had prompted Leonardo's note on Ludovic's fallen fortunes, is seen in his sketches of wreathing smoke and flame—studies of spirals akin to those of the breaking wave at Piombino—with notes that "on the 16th and 18th of December, 1511, at three in the afternoon, occurred the conflagration made by the Swiss at Milan."¹ But the change of rulers brought change of circumstances.

He had perhaps formerly acted as tutor to the young prince. He has left among his manuscripts (Institut F) part of a Latin grammar and glossary which he may have written for the use of his pupil. Doubtless Maximilian resented his having entered the service of the French. There are no records of his further employment.

The election of Giovanni de' Medici, son of Leonardo's old patron, Lorenzo il Magnifico, as Pope Leo X. in March, 1513, was followed by the gradual migration of artists from all parts of Italy to seek the service of the Vatican—and among them was Leonardo.

¹ Windsor MSS., "Notes et Croquis sur l'Atmosphere," I r.

In the MSS. of the Institut E. (fol. 1 r.) is the note: "I set out from Milan for Rome on the 24th day of September, 1513, with Giovanni Francesco de' Melzi Salai Lorenzo and Il Fanfoia."

He was in Florence on October 10th, and there probably met and travelled on with Giuliano de' Medici, il Magnifico, the Pope's brother, who was his patron during his stay in Rome. Through his influence he was given rooms in the Belvedere, being there in December as is shown by a memorandum of work done by the architect of the fabric Giuliano Leni.¹ Although thus lodged within the precincts of the Vatican his talents were not employed there.

Vasari only says that the Pope gave him a commission and was indignant because he began by making the varnish, and at this point the narrative breaks off and apparently the commission with it. He mentions two small pictures which cannot be traced, a *Madonna and Child* and the *Portrait of a Boy*, as painted for the Pope's Datary Baldassare Turini; but in treating of Leonardo's life at Rome Vasari is mainly concerned with his wonderful inventions of superior mechanical toys, which he describes apologetically but with enthusiasm.

Tradition ascribes to Leonardo the fresco of the *Virgin and Child with Donor* in the Convent of S. Onofrio at Rome, which is now, however, accepted as the work of Giovanni Antonio Boltraffio, who is presumably identical with the Giovanni cited by Leonardo in the list of pupils who accompanied him to Rome. The fresco was probably painted during this period. A drawing in M. Bonnat's collection, probably by Leonardo, served as study for the

¹ Müntz, "Historiens et Critiques de Raphael," p. 133.



New Gallery Portfolio]

[*Royal Library, Windsor*

STUDY OF DRAPERY FOR KNEELING FIGURE

Infant Christ. Of Boltraffio's other works the most closely related to it is the *Madonna and Child* in the Poldi Pezzoli (No. 660).

The Cardinal of Aragon on visiting the painter at Amboise in 1517 was shown a portrait of a certain Florentine lady, painted from life at the request of Giuliano de' Medici. This must have reference to a picture painted in Rome (for there only the connection existed between Leonardo and his patron), and painted presumably before January, 1515, when, as Leonardo records,¹ Giuliano set out "to go and marry a wife in Savoy."

A Raphael drawing at Windsor, a sketch of the *Leda* of Leonardo, was probably made when the two painters were present together in Rome, and we may infer that Leonardo was then making studies towards it, and perhaps then, if at all, he executed the picture.

A tiny sketch of the composition occurs on a sheet of his notes and mathematical drawings.² Another rather indistinct sketch, about two inches in height, is at Windsor.³

There are also at Windsor studies for the head, seen back and front, with elaborate braiding of the hair.⁴

Pictures in the Borghese Gallery, in the collection of the Baronne de Ruble at Paris, at Hanover and elsewhere are free copies of the same original composition, with which the Raphael drawing and the sketches at Milan and Windsor are evidently connected.

Two undoubtedly authentic sketches for a picture of

¹ R., 1377.

² C. A., 156 r. b., M.-W., Bei. II.

³ "Croquis et dessins de Nerfs et Vaisseaux," fol. 9 r.

⁴ "Etudes sur la chevelure," 6 r. and 7 r.

Leda kneeling are also found at Windsor,¹ and with these a drawing at Chatsworth is somewhat closely connected. To the larger of the two sketches at Windsor a picture at Neuwied of *Leda* kneeling has, I understand, a very considerable similarity.

The "Anonimo Fiorentino" mentions a *Leda* by Leonardo, but without further remark.

Lomazzo describes it very exactly both in verse and prose as in the composition with the standing figure.² In the "Idea del Tempio" he classes it with the *Mona Lisa* as among his few completed works, and says that both were then, *i.e.*, in 1591, at Fontainebleau. Cassiano del Pozzo described the picture at Fontainebleau in 1625: *Leda* standing, at her feet four infants emerged from two shells;—the picture in bad condition.

Père Dan did not include it in 1642 in his list, which, however, he calls "*autres ouvrages de Léonard da Vincy*," but he describes the palace room by room, and in another room near the Salle des Bains mentions a *Leda* accompanied by Jupiter disguised as a swan.

A *Leda* by Leonardo figures in M. Herbot's inventory made in 1694, and then records of the picture at Fontainebleau cease.

A life-sized cartoon of "a *Leda* standing naked with Cupids in one of the corners at the bottom," was described by Edward Wright in 1721, in "Some Observations made in travelling through France and Italy," as one of a collection of cartoons by Leonardo da Vinci belonging to the Marquis Casnedi. There is, however, no other record of its history. That Leonardo carried

¹ "Notes et Croquis sur l'Anatomie du Cheval," II. fol. 44 r.

² "Trattato," p. 274, and "Grotteschi," Book IV., p. 246.

his composition as far as the stage of the cartoon the existence of the various copies renders essentially probable. Lomazzo's evidence affords some ground for believing that he executed the picture.

The list of works done at Rome is a meagre one. Vasari refers to the perpetual discord with Michelangelo as in evidence at Rome, but the cause of the lack of commissions lay within himself. The practice of painting had no longer more than a secondary interest for him. More than ever the trend of his activity was scientific. His writings show that he was engaged in studies in optics, in acoustics,¹ in anatomy at the Hospital,²—for which he was denounced to the Pope by one of his apprentices—studying geology in the Campagna,³ devising improved methods for coining for the mint at Rome,⁴ undertaking engineering works at the harbour of Civita Vecchia,⁵ and finishing “on the 9th of July at 11 o'clock at night,” a treatise on geometry. Small wonder that in the drafts of a letter to his patron⁶ he speaks of recovering from an illness, and regrets not to have been able to satisfy completely His Excellency's desires! The letter is filled with querulous complaints of two German apprentices. His stoicism was not proof against the lesser foes of his own household.

A note “at Parma at ‘La Campana’ on the 25th of September, 1514,”⁷ possibly refers to a visit there; but in a letter of December 14th to Giuliano da Vinci, who was then in Rome, his wife Alessandra asks to be remembered to his brother Leonardo, “uomo excellen-

¹ C. A., 65 r.

² C. A., 182 v., R., 1353.

³ C. A., 92 v.

⁴ R., 726.

⁵ C. A., 63 v.

⁶ C. A., 247 v.

⁷ R., 1065

tissimo e singularissimo,"¹ and Leonardo is in Rome on the 9th of January, 1515, and records the departure of Giuliano de' Medici to Savoy, and the news of the death of Louis XII.²

This is the last reference to his presence in the Papal City. Il Magnifico returned with his bride in February, and set out in July with the Papal army, and all his household, and presumably with Leonardo, to watch the movements of the French, and if necessary to defend his possessions; but fell sick and went to Florence and there died on March 17th, 1516. Leonardo apparently accompanied the Papal army to Piacenza, and Dr. Solmi cites a note in the Codice Atlantico,³ of the towns between Piacenza and Bologna as indicating his route from there to be present at the Concordat held in Bologna in December between the Pope and the victor of Marignano, Francis I. It is entirely probable that Leonardo was present, and there met Francis I., and that when in January, 1516, a month after the Concordat, the King returned to France, he took with him Leonardo, together with Francesco Melzi and his servants, Salai and Baptista de Villanis. The exact circumstances of his departure to France are not known. He was allotted as residence the manor house at Cloux, near to the royal château of Amboise. His offices were, "premier peintre et ingénieur et architecte du Roy, mechanischien d'estat."⁴ His salary, according to Benvenuto Cellini, was 700 crowns, the equivalent of £1,400.

¹ Uzielli (1872), Doc. XXII.

² R., 1377.

³ C. A., 259 r. (Solmi). I have failed to identify the reference. His presence in Bologna is however referred to on 257 r.

⁴ Piot, "Le Cabinet de l'Amateur," 1863, No. 26 (Müntz).



[The Louvre

THE VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS



Hanfstängl photo

[National Gallery]

THE VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS

A few miles distant was the castle of Loches, where, eight years previously, the captivity of his old patron, Ludovic Sforza, had ended in death.

There is a drawing at Windsor of Amboise seen across the Loire, its towers evanescent as in morning light, and there are a few notes in the MSS. which relate to work done in France.

Most of these relate to the construction of a canal with locks near Romorantin, on a tributary of the Loire, which formed part of a larger project for connecting the waters of the Loire and the Saône. One of these passages¹ refers to his having done similar work at Friuli and is the only record of his having been there.

Passing in review the wanderings of his life from Tuscany to Amboise, employment in works of engineering and canalisation recurs as consistently as in art.

He designed a pleasure palace near to Amboise, of which there is a ground-plan with explanatory notes in the *Codice Atlantico*.² "The palace of the prince," Leonardo calls it. It is rectangular, with round towers at each corner, and surrounded by a moat. On one side is a road leading to Amboise, on the other a lake to be used for aquatic tournaments.

Mr. T. A. Cook, in "The Spiral in Nature and Art," seeks to show that he was the architect of the spiral staircase in the Château of Blois, of which the construction was commenced in 1516, and adduces considerable though indirect evidence to support the theory from Leonardo's studies of spiral forms in nature, his drawings of dust and smoke, of falling water and of the coils of Leda's hair.

¹ Arundel, 270 b.; R., 1077.

² R., LXXXI. 2 and 748, C. A., 76 v

There are no records as to the authorship of the spiral staircase.

The only contemporary account of his life at Cloux is that of a visit paid to him by the Cardinal of Aragon on the 10th of October, 1517, as described by the Cardinal's secretary, Antonio de Beatis,¹ on which occasion Leonardo showed him the portrait of a Florentine lady painted for Giuliano de' Medici, a S. John the Baptist as a youth, and a Madonna and Child in the lap of S. Anne.

"A certain paralysis has," he says, "attacked his right hand, which forbids the expecting of any more good work from him, but he has given a very good training to a Milanese pupil who works extremely well, and although Leonardo can no longer colour with that sweetness with which he was wont he is still able to make drawings and to teach others."

They saw also his manuscripts, his treatise on anatomy—for which he had dissected more than thirty bodies—his treatise on the nature of water, and others dealing with divers machines and other things, "in an endless number of volumes all in the vulgar tongue, which if they be published will be profitable and very delectable."

This expectation is now (in 1903) within measurable distance of being realized.

The narrative shows that Leonardo's time of work was ended. The rich treasures of his mind were still unfolded in conversation. These last years suggest in some measure the sundown of Goethe's life at Weimar. Benvenuto

¹ The extract from fol. 76 v. and 77 of the MS. at Naples (Bibl. Naz.) is printed by Dr. Müller-Walde (Bei. IV., pp. 262 and 229). He corrects Uzielli's statement that the visit was made in 1516.

Cellini describes the King as visiting Leonardo constantly and hanging on his words.

The impression which they made upon Francis is summed up in the remark which Cellini says he heard from the King's lips, namely, that "he did not believe that any other man had come into the world who had attained so great knowledge as Leonardo, and that not only as sculptor, painter and architect, for beyond that he was a profound philosopher."

The strong attachment that existed between the two was the basis of Vasari's story of the painter dying in the King's arms. Leonardo died on the 2nd of May, 1519.

The date is given in Melzi's letter to Giuliano da Vinci announcing the event.¹ The King was then with the Court at S. Germain-en-Laye, where he signed a decree on May 1st. Lomazzo repeats Vasari's statement in the "Idea del Tempio" (p. 58), but elsewhere, in the "Grotteschi," Book II. (p. 109), he speaks of the grief of Francis when Melzi brought him the news of Leonardo's death.

By his will² he bequeathed to Francesco Melzi all his manuscripts and personal effects; to Salai and Baptista de Villanis, his vineyard at Milan, and to the latter his right of water from the canal of S. Cristoforo; to his waiting-woman, Matturina, a fur-lined cloak, a gown, and two ducats; to his brothers, the principal and interest of the four hundred crowns which were to his account in Florence, and his property at Fiesole. He left bene-

¹ Uzielli (1872), Doc. XXVI.

² The will is dated "the 23rd of April, 1518, before Easter." The year is therefore to be interpreted by the French method of reckoning from Easter, which in 1518 fell on April 4th, and in 1519 on April 24th. The reference is really to the latter year.

factions to the poor, and dispositions for his burial in the Church of S. Florentin, for the carrying of tapers, and for the celebration of masses for the repose of his soul.

He was buried on the 12th of August, in the cloister of the church of S. Florentin, at Amboise.¹

As he himself wrote of death, so it was: "Siccome una giornata bene spesa dà lieto dormire così una vita bene usata dà lieto morire."²

What more fitting epitaph than the lines of Landor?

I strove with none ; for none was worth my strife,
Nature I loved, and next to Nature, Art ;
I warmed both hands before the fire of life,
It sinks and I am ready to depart.

¹ Piot, "Le Cabinet de l'Amateur," 1863, No. 26.

² Codice Trivulziano, 32.

PART II

THE PICTURES

WHAT of Vasari's story of how Leonardo painted an angel in Verrocchio's *Baptism of Christ*?

Vasari is naturally, though not always justly, most suspected when most picturesque. Fact may take the hue of romance. His statement of how Leonardo hired musicians to play and sing to Mona Lisa during the time that he painted, in order so to keep the intent expression, is paralleled by a passage in Leonardo's own MS. advocating such a practice.¹ We may dismiss as an obvious embellishment the touch about Verrocchio abandoning painting out of chagrin on seeing Leonardo's angel. No such supposition of improbability attaches to the statement that Leonardo executed a part of one of Verrocchio's commissions. It was an occurrence common enough in the relation of master and pupil. But so far as the question can be decided, it must be from the evidence of the picture, now in the Accademia, and there is no agreement among critics in their interpretation. Morelli considers the whole picture the work of Verrocchio. Mr. Berenson sees in the drapery of the kneeling angel the work of another as yet unidentified pupil of Verrocchio.

¹ Ludwig, 36.

Recent German critics trace the work of Leonardo not only in the angel, but in parts of the other angel and in the landscape and background. Dr. Bayersdorfer claimed that the line of profile of the angel as originally drawn by Verrocchio is still visible, and that the contrast between this type and the altered profile is a potent witness to the intervention of Leonardo's hand. There seems to be some such line of profile, but I should hesitate to found any theory on it in view of the repainted condition of the whole picture, which, after having been originally painted in tempera, has been restored by a later hand in an oil medium.

The evidence of the picture in this state, while not availing to substantiate the tradition, yet lends it some contributory support. The two angels have certain resemblances of detail to the types of drawings by the two masters. In that admittedly by Verrocchio the cartilage of the nose is sunken, the nose itself is rather short and deep set, and with nostrils dilated; the eyes have large pupils and large irises; the hair is naturally curly; the face is square, hard, and comparatively flat; all of which characteristics occur in the drawing of an angel's head by Verrocchio in the Uffizi, No. 130. The type of the other face is longer and more oval. The nose is aquiline. The hair is not naturally thick and curly, as in the other three heads. The hair on the eyebrows is hardly drawn at all. In all these points the head more approximates to the type of the youthful heads in Leonardo's drawings.

The manner of the folds of the robe upon the kneeling figure may be considered in connection with Leonardo's study of drapery at Windsor (Braun, 196). The robe falls from the waist to the inner bend of the knee, with almost

exactly similar folds, and resembles it also in the way it is caught back on the leg with two naturally falling pleats, showing the whole outline of the leg and foot. The folds fall more inevitably with a less circular angle than those in the mantle of S. John, where the roundness of the loops of the folds almost approaches that of Perugino's drawings.

The folded hands of the second angel have a delicacy of modelling and softness of contour which may serve to suggest in far-away fashion the folded hands of Mona Lisa; but Verrocchio's supreme subtlety in the delineation of hands, as revealed in the *Lady with the Bouquet*, would serve to render any theory that these hands could not be his merely a hazardous attempt to limit his power.

Of the peculiar mistiness and effect of "atmosphere" of the landscape it is hard to speak positively, for there is so little with which to compare it and show what was Verrocchio's treatment of landscape; but it is such as Verrocchio did not transmit to any other of his pupils, not even to Lorenzo di Credi, whose outlines are all harder because less moulded, and with less gradation of light. The larger di Credi *Annunciation* in the Uffizi is perhaps his nearest approach to this effect.

This haze of distance, tremulous in outline, silver-gray with breaking light, is a characteristic of all Leonardo's landscape backgrounds, varying very little in method during the years that intervened between the earliest and the latest of these compositions. It is the same haze of distance, more tranquil, more pietistic in effect, which is found also in certain of the works of Piero de' Franceschi, whose influence over Leonardo, if one may judge purely from internal evidence, was greater than that of any of

his contemporaries except Verrocchio. There is no record of any direct connection between the two painters, but the proximity of Arezzo to Florence renders it extremely probable that Leonardo was acquainted with Piero's work in S. Francesco at an early period. His interest in the presentment of the scientific theory of his art was such that we may assume that if it were in any way possible he would know the elder painter's treatises on geometry and perspective even before the date of his acquaintance in Milan with Fra Luca Pacioli, who was Piero's fellow-townsmen and pupil.

In the result in practice deduced from such scientific study Piero was also his forerunner. The *Vision of Constantine*, at Arezzo, is the most triumphant victory of the problem of the effect of light set and solved in art previous to the *Vierge aux Rochers*. It is in added subtilty of rendering of this problem that Leonardo's art changed most after he reached maturity. So completely did the desire to give expression to it ultimately dominate him that the *St. John* in the Louvre seems primarily a study of its gradation, and only secondarily a figure painting. How perfectly prepared a ground-work his art offered, even in its inception, for the incoming of strange lights and shadows, is apparent in the *Annunciation*, in the Louvre. This small sketch—it is about 5 inches high, by 2 feet long—is, indisputably,—as far as judgment purely from internal evidence can make the attribution of a work of art indisputable—an early work of Leonardo's. The superior delicacy of its texture supplies perhaps the most cogent reason why the attribution to Leonardo of the angel in the *Baptism of Christ* must be adjudged at most a matter of uncertainty.



New Gallery Portfolio]

[*Royal Library, Windsor*

STUDY FOR HEAD OF S. PHILIP

The draperies of the Virgin and Angel are simple and inevitable, with few folds, after the principle in the "Trattato" that "drapery should be let fall simply where it is its nature to flow;"¹ and falling on the ground the hem of the long robes lies around them, suggesting the stillness of encircling pools, fulfilling what he says elsewhere on the folds of drapery, that "every thing naturally tends to remain at rest."²

A study by Leonardo, a pen drawing for the right arm and shoulder of the angel in the *Annunciation* is in the Library of Christ Church, Oxford, No. 227.

The contrast between the treatment of drapery in the Louvre *Annunciation* and the heavier texture and folds of the *Annunciation* in the Uffizi is almost enough of itself to forbid the ascription of the latter to Leonardo. The vexed question of its authorship has I think been solved by Mr. Berenson's attribution to Verrocchio. Possibly Lorenzo di Credi assisted him in the execution of the drapery and in the herbage of the foreground.

The head of the Virgin in the Louvre picture recurs with more elaboration in the treatment of hair and head-dress in a chalk drawing in the Uffizi, No. 428, which Professor Wickhoff ascribes to Verrocchio as a youthful work, and Morelli considers a Flemish copy after Verrocchio—an opinion concurred in by Mr. Berenson with some reservation as to the nationality of the copyist.

The drawing is of extreme delicacy of workmanship the effect of which is however somewhat marred by its over-worked, over-stippled condition, which has sufficed to suggest a copyist and a Fleming as having executed

¹ R., 392.

² R., 390.

it; although something of the same timidity of touch and over-modelling is perceptible in the drawing of a female head in the British Museum (Malcolm Collection), and in the half-length of a female figure in the Museum at Dresden, both of which Morelli assigns to Verrocchio.

Vasari, in his life of Verrocchio, speaks of possessing certain of his drawings, "executed with much patience and great judgment—among which are some female heads, beautiful in appearance and in the arrangement of the hair, which Leonardo da Vinci constantly imitated on account of their beauty."

The reference to the patience shown in execution, and the special mention of the arrangement of the hair, would be entirely applicable to the drawing in the Uffizi, which—whether it be adjudged an original or no—certainly represents one of those drawings of extraordinary finish which served as models to Leonardo; and of the study of which the Virgin of his *Annunciation* is the result. The similarity between the angels in the Louvre and Uffizi *Annunciations* would indicate that for this head, in the Louvre picture, another drawing by Verrocchio served in like stead.

But the individuality of the pupil is clearly apparent. The Virgin is the type of the Madonna of the *Adoration* and of the *Vierge aux Rochers*. We may note the high arch of the eyebrow, almost bare as was Leonardo's habit; the deep, graceful curve of the upper eyelid; and the hair caressing the temple as it falls in the softest and most wavy of tresses. The corner of the mouth is in shadow; a tiny hollow where the cheek begins veiling the spot where the lines of the lips meet.

The hands are entirely characteristic. They are almost



New Gallery Portfolio]

[*Royal Library, Windsor*

STUDY FOR HEAD OF JUDAS

as prehensile as those of *Mona Lisa*. They are folded meekly over the breast, expressing thus the Virgin's deep humility. The hand serves in his art as the index of the soul. His innate love of symbolism ever found utterance in its pose. The angel's hand, holding a rod of lilies, would seem to have a suggestion of the grace of that of the angel in Simone Martini's *Annunciation*, in the manner in which the fingers taper to a point on the stem of the rod.

There is no profusion of botanical detail in the foreground, as in the *Annunciations* in the Uffizi by Verrocchio (No. 1089), and Lorenzo di Credi.

He painted flowers better than either. The drawings of plants and flowers at Windsor are an abundant witness of his interest in their representation. In the cartoon for the tapestry, representing the sin of Adam and Eve, which was intended for the King of Portugal,—where profusion of flowers and plants would symbolize the delights from which the first parents fell by sin,—his painting of a meadow, filled with rich vegetation, is such as to occasion from Vasari words of extraordinary eulogy: "for careful execution and fidelity to nature they are such that there is no genius in the world, however God-like, which could produce similar objects with equal truth." Where, as in the *Annunciation*, herbage would have no such inherent symbolic place, detail is not suffered to intrude upon the simplicity of treatment which the subject required. The sword is so dark in the shadow that the eye passes over it lightly. There are a few glints of colour on the herbage. One beautiful cluster of flowers is seen just beyond where the angel is kneeling, and a few other flowers are growing under the shadow of the wall.

A row of trees in the background stands out in deep colour against the light. Beyond is a vision of hill and sky—blue and gray, soft and misty in outline. In a space between the dark foliage a twin-peaked hill is seen in the far distance.

The Virgin's books lie on a simple reading-desk, which is as bare of carving or entablature as are the benches by the wall beyond it. The simplicity of the room, the humility of the kneeling Virgin, suggest something of the same purpose as is shown in the early works of the pre-Raphaelites.

In only one detail has he given free rein to the luxuriance of creative fancy. The wings of the angel are painted with a very perceptible delight and with care of the minutest. Row on row of feather and tufted plumage, the down quivering as it takes the light; long streaming feathers ending the wings; lesser feathers above them, and tufts of tiny feather and down nestling softly beneath the wing! Why this minuteness, while the walls of the garden, and the walls and benches of the house are simple and bare?

Leonardo was more interested in wings. At Milan, and at a later period in Florence, he was engaged upon the invention of devices for flying. In connection with this project he studied the laws governing the flight of birds; and the treatise "*Sul volo degli uccelli*," written in Florence in the spring of 1505, records the result of his observations.

It was by reproducing the structure of the bird's wing in some mechanism capable of being attached to and worked by man that he looked to find solution of the problem.



New Gallery Portfolio

[Royal Library, Windsor]

STUDY FOR THE HEAD OF S. JAMES AND
ARCHITECTURAL DRAWING

The *Annunciation*, painted when still a pupil of Verrocchio's, perhaps as early as 1470, contains the foreshadowing of things to come. The wings of the angel would support the weight of the body. Of how many other pictures of the Annunciation can as much be said?

Leonardo had at least reached his thirtieth year before he left Florence for Milan. He had then already been enrolled for ten years as a member of the Guild of Painters. The only other paintings still in existence which can be assigned to this first Florentine period are the *S. Jerome in the Desert* and the *Adoration of the Magi*, cartoons executed in ground colouring only. The fact leaves an irreparable blank in the history of his genesis as a colourist. The earliest to be executed was the *S. Jerome*. The history of the picture is adventurous enough. Cardinal Fesch found the major portion of it used as the lid of a box in a shop in Rome in the early part of last century. A panel containing the head had been cut out, and this he afterwards discovered hanging up in a shoemaker's shop. The reunited picture was acquired by Pius IX. and placed in the Vatican Gallery.

There is no documentary evidence relating to the picture or connecting the subject with any commission of Leonardo. It is assigned to him purely on internal grounds. The attitude of the saint kneeling on the left knee with right arm stretched out and with clenched hand holding a stone with which he beats his breast is exactly reproduced in a drawing at Windsor,¹ which however is from a totally different point of view, the figure of the saint being seen in left profile, the body

¹ Braun, 202.

turning away from the observer and the left hand holding a crucifix.

Judging from the direction of the shading the drawing was made with the right hand; but the vigour of the modelling of the body would go far to establish its authorship even were it not plainly a variant of the same composition. The greater dramatic possibilities in the position finally adopted are evident in the cartoon.

The effect of intensity of suffering is realized to the full, yet without exaggeration, by the emaciated head and shrunk shoulders of the saint. The gaunt, protruding tendons of the neck are perhaps the more startlingly apparent in the grays and browns of the cartoon undraped in final colour.

Here, as in the modelling of the skull, the hand at work is that of the scientist; he must have already begun the systematic study of anatomy. The result is a triumph of realism of which the only contemporary parallels occur in Leonardo's other works.

The head seems later than the pen-drawing in the Uffizi (No. 446), dated 1478, of the deeply furrowed head of an old man. It is similar in result of method to the head of an old man with deeply sunken cheeks in the right of the *Adoration*, which it probably preceded in date of composition by a very short time.

On part of the background, which is uncovered by ground colouring, there is a rough sketch of the façade of a church, which bears a considerable resemblance to the new façade of Santa Maria Novella, constructed by Leo Battista Alberti in 1477. By the side of this on the extreme right is part of a nude figure seen in profile



Hanfstängl photo]

[Brera Gallery, Milan

THE HEAD OF CHRIST.]

which may possibly be connected with his studies for the composition of a *S. Sebastian*.

A comparison of the sketch with the drawings by Leonardo for this subject in the Bonnat Collection and at Hamburg¹ suggests an identity of motive; but the sketch on the Vatican panel is so slight that it does no more than make possible the conjecture.

His drawings reveal how continually his mind was occupied in considering how to represent the subjects most generally treated of in Italian art. He almost drew as he thought. The pen's fleeting impress would seem at times simply intended to perpetuate the thought itself, limpid and elemental in first conception, volatile in the sway of possibilities as the conception grew in harmony of ordered purpose. Despite the insistence of its utterance the thought apparently often remained to the last in the stage of things tentative. So the drawings are projects—ships of dream set sailing, of which only a few ever came to port.

No one of the brief list of Leonardo's sacred figure compositions seems to have been associated in inception with the giving of any particular commission. The motive has slowly ripened in the mind of the artist. Sketch after sketch attests its growth long before the commission afforded the opportunity of executing it. The *Last Supper* was begun in Florence. The figure of Christ is twice sketched on a sheet of studies for the *Adoration*.

The studies for the *Adoration of the Magi*, the cartoon for which, now in the Uffizi, was almost certainly undertaken in fulfilment of a commission from the monks of

¹ Reproduced M.-W. Bei. IV.

S. Donato at Scopeto in 1480, extend back in apparently almost unbroken sequence to a drawing in the collection of M. Bonnat for an *Adoration of the Shepherds*, which approximates in technique to the earliest work. The grouping of the central figures—the Infant Christ lying on the ground with another child, presumably S. John, bending over him, and the Virgin kneeling in adoration—would suggest a *Nativity*, a subject executed, according to Vasari, soon after his arrival in Milan, and sent by the Duke to the Emperor Maximilian; but the carefully individualized attitudes of the bystanders—nude, as was Leonardo's practice—show that it is connected with the other studies for an *Adoration*. Two of the figures, the youth on the left with his foot on a step, and the bearded man with folded arms, are reproduced with modifications in a sheet of studies of bystanders in the Valton collection. The young man who shades his eyes with his left hand recurs in a sheet of studies in the Louvre, in which the greater veneration expressed in the attitudes portrayed by the artist shows that the Magi had taken the place of the shepherds in his intention.

The kneeling figure of one of the Magi is the prototype of the figure kneeling on the right of the *Virgin and Child* in the Galichon drawing and the Uffizi cartoon. Above it is the nude figure of a youth bending forward in the deepest humility, which is found in reverse on the left in the Galichon drawing.

There is a sheet of studies of bystanders in the Cologne Museum which seems to be of somewhat earlier date than this drawing. The youth in tunic and buskins with arms extended, seen from behind and looking round to face the observer, occurs in simpler and more tentative



[After the engraving by Raphael Morghen]

THE LAST SUPPER



Alinari photo

[*Sta. Maria delle Grazie, Milan*]

THE LAST SUPPER

rendering in the Cologne drawing, seen in front with the head turned on the shoulder.

On the reverse of the sheet in the Louvre are two sketches for the *Last Supper*, and more studies for the *Adoration*. These consist of a nude figure standing with head turned round in profile and left arm extended, a youth seated, and a group of two seated figures, the elder leaning on a staff listening to a youth who leans forward gesticulating with his hands, his right foot on the bench on which he sits, and the knee almost touching his chin.

The group recurs in slightly varied attitude in a drawing in the British Museum (Malcolm collection), and above are two standing figures, of whom one is blowing into the ear of the other through a long trumpet.

It is difficult to surmise how he intended to introduce this incident, and neither group is retained in the Galichon drawing.

This drawing, now in the Louvre, is of the highest value, both as marking the stage of essential completeness of conception, and for its inherent artistic qualities, for the delicacy of its texture and its unsurpassed fineness of line. In comparison with the picture in the Uffizi its *mise-en-scène* is more intimate. In the drawing the action took place within walls, and the terraced background is seen through an open arch. The bystanders are in comparison few. In the Uffizi cartoon they become a mighty host. The action takes place in the open air. The architecture is relegated to the background, the result being to greatly heighten the effect of distance. The pose of the Madonna is the same, but the winsome girlish figure of the drawing has put on statuesque

dignity. In contrast with the plastic modelling of contour of the cartoon the bystanders seem nearer and more akin, the mystery of the Incarnation is less transcendent.

The latest in the sequence of preparatory drawings is a study in the Uffizi of the background as it appears in the picture, the angle of the terrace being reversed from that in the Galichon drawing. A camel is represented in it lying in front of the steps at the place where in the picture two sibyls are standing.

The cartoon in the Uffizi, to which all these drawings are contributory in intent, ranks, despite its inchoate condition, with the *Cenacolo*, the *Mona Lisa*, and the *Virgin of the Rocks*, as the greatest record of Leonardo's performance in art. Escaping the restorer by the fact of its incompleteness it contains more of Leonardo's original work than any other picture. Vasari refers to it, then in the house of Amerigo Benci, as among the best of his works, more especially as regards the heads.

Of all the renderings of the *Adoration* in Italian Art it is the one which approaches nearest to realizing the essential meaning of the word.

Gentile da Fabriano's picture in the Accademia, in contrast, is as a scene from a miracle play, devotional in intent and in accessories, the figures having the early Umbrian purity and solemnity, but treading their allotted parts with but little more self-subsistent vitality than wired puppets.

In the Gozzoli frescoes in the Riccardi palace the solemnity has given place to a masque of quaint conceits. The pageant is frankly Florentine. As the gay cavalcade winds by, we think no whit the more than the riders of what they have set out to see.

Botticelli's most famous *Adoration* is charming as a portrait group of the Medicis, who are all turning their heads away from the Madonna and Child in order to be seen by the spectator. There is no more adoration in the whole group than there is humility in the figure of Sigismondo Malatesta, in the fresco at Rimini, kneeling before the saint who is his namesake.

Much of the outline of Leonardo's picture is muffled in the ground colouring. As in the gray light before daybreak, shapes hesitate to take form. Gradually the mass unravels, and the mist which lies around the central figures resolves itself into a sea of faces, upturned in wonder, and filled with sadness, drawn irresistibly by one impulse, yet hesitating to approach very near to the Madonna. Those who are nearest crouch, shielding their eyes, eager to see, yet dazzled in beholding Christ.

The Madonna, quite unconscious of the throng, sits looking at the Child in her arms. His left hand touches the lid of a casket offered by one of the kneeling Magi. His right is raised in blessing, but it is a baby gesture which has unconsciously become the sign.

A bank stretches across the centre of the picture, and against it five youthful retainers are sitting. They are weary with travel. Two, sunk in sleep, suggest somewhat the figure of S. John in the *Last Supper*. To the right a woman is clinging with her hands, looking over the top of the bank.

In the right of the picture, above the kneeling king, a youth is seen in profile, looking up, with right hand raised, and an old man is bending forward, his left hand laid on his breast, his right hand shading his eyes. Next to him the emaciated head of an old man recalls the

S. Jerome. His hand is lifted. He turns his sunken and apparently sightless eyes to the Virgin.

To the right of these, in left profile, two youthful heads of extreme beauty are looking down at the Child. Below these is a head in deep shadow, bending forward.

To the extreme right of the picture stands a figure in armour, impassive, with head turned aside, looking down, concerning which Mr. Berenson has made the interesting conjecture that Leonardo may have here introduced his own portrait, Botticelli having done this in an exactly similar position. But the fact that the figure is in armour renders the conjecture less probable, and Botticelli's *Adoration*, unlike Leonardo's, is admittedly a collection of portraits.

The figure is balanced by one on the extreme left of a man with long beard standing with head bowed. The two seem sentinels. They have something of the impressiveness of the figures in the Giorgione altarpiece at Castelfranco. They serve as links between the spectator and the action portrayed.

In the left foreground kneels the youngest of the Magi. The third is bending forward from behind the Madonna.

The positions of the three form an equilateral triangle around the Madonna and Child. The figure recurs too frequently in Leonardo's space composition for its incidence here to be other than deliberate, although the triangle is here not in the plane of the picture, as is usual, but in the plane in which the action represented takes place.

Between the two Magi on the left an old man is bending down to the ground, and a woman crouches, looking up and screening her eyes with her hand. Immediately



Brogi photo

THE LAST SUPPER

S. THOMAS, S. JAMES, AND S. PHILIP

Isola Maria delle Grazie, Milan

behind these is a group of seven heads, one at least plainly showing Verrocchio's influence. In the background feathery stone-pines grow amidst the ruined masonry.

A horseman on the extreme left is looking away and pointing to the central figure. On another horse to the left of the Madonna are two riders. The first is pointing to the Child. The other has passed his arm beneath that of his companion and holds the bridle.

In the background on the left a figure, leaning over a parapet, is speaking to two horsemen who have entered the portico. In front of the terrace steps stand two sibyls, and at the top a figure is sitting.

A laurel and a palm are growing in the middle space of the picture, between which, beyond the terrace, a horseman is visible, and in the right background two others are tilting at each other. Beyond them are roughly outlined mountain peaks.

"But like so many of his other works," says Vasari, "this also remained unfinished."

Is this in itself the reason, and the departure from Florence a sequel not a primary cause? Did the artist—ever unsatisfied—abandon the work as falling short of his own desired standard of attainment?

It is rather in the record of his other works than in the picture itself that support for the theory must be sought.

Four of Leonardo's drawings have served as studies for the composition known as the *Virgin of the Rocks*. They offer no ground for inference as to the priority of the picture in the Louvre or that in the National Gallery.

The beautiful silver-point drawing at Turin of the angel's head, unsurpassed, if indeed approached, by either picture in delicacy of modelling, is a preliminary study for the Louvre picture, in which the figure of the angel has suffered from repainting. The angel in the National Gallery picture is more in profile, and the head is more thrown back, and apparently a different study was used for it.

The study of drapery at Windsor,¹ which has been used for the kneeling figure of the angel, is of considerably earlier date than the execution of the composition. It has not been exactly followed in either version; but the arrangement of the folds bears a somewhat greater resemblance to that in the picture in the National Gallery.

The drawing in the Louvre on greenish paper for the head of S. John,² which has suffered from additions by a later hand, is a study for the Louvre picture. It is pricked for transfer to the cartoon. It has been followed very closely. The head in the National Gallery picture is slightly more full face; this fact making a corresponding minute difference in the shadow round the eye, and on the lower part of the cheek. It seems also the head of a somewhat older child.

The drawing at Windsor, in red chalk, for the bust of the Infant Christ, leans far more closely to the National Gallery picture, for which it may be considered a preliminary study. The drawings on greenish paper in silver-point, for the head of Christ, in the Louvre, of which neither Dr. Richter nor Mr. Berenson admit the genuineness, are not exact representations of the attitude in either picture.

¹ Braun, 196.

² Braun, 170.

In the Louvre picture the head of Christ is not in exact profile, but is a shade nearer to full face. A little bit of the arch of the temple over the far eye is visible; and certainly more of the forehead and the upper lip than is seen in exact profile.

In the National Gallery picture and the Windsor drawing the head is in exact profile, and it is seen on the level. In the Louvre it leans over slightly, the weight of the body being thrown more completely on the left arm. More of the top of the head is visible in consequence, and the chin is thrown more in shadow. The modelling of the whole of the lower part of the face is that of a younger child.

This consideration of drawings suggests that neither picture is a copy of the other. This becomes evident in the further examination of detail. There is primarily the complete difference of composition in the right hand of the angel, visible in the Louvre picture, above the head of Christ with extended forefinger, and omitted in the National Gallery picture. Moreover, the arrangement of drapery on the left arm of the angel is also entirely dissimilar in the two pictures. The same is also true of the folds of the Virgin's mantle. In the Louvre picture her left hand is extended over Christ, the fingers coming forward in almost exact foreshortening. In the National Gallery picture the hand is extended, but the gesture is entirely modified, and the fingers are slanting to the left.

The body of the S. John in the Louvre picture is seen more in profile, and is leaning forward at a sharper angle; it is more expressive of the impetus of movement than in the National Gallery picture.

These differences, arising from the use of different studies, are such as a copyist would not have made. The connection of each picture with Leonardo's drawings is direct and primary.

The Louvre picture is first mentioned in the "Diarium" of Cassiano del Pozzo, who visited Fontainebleau in 1625. It was then in the Royal collection. He says nothing as to its earlier history. His description is curiously inexact in omitting any reference to the angel and speaking of the picture as containing three figures, viz. the Madonna, the Child and S. John.

The omission is repaired in the description by Père Dan, who visited Fontainebleau in 1642: "Notre Dame avec un petit Jesus qu'un Ange appuye."

The collection, as it then existed, had been formed, Père Dan states, by Francis I., Henry II., Charles IX., Henry *le Grand* and Louis XIII. He specifies Leonardo as one of seven Italian painters whose works they had collected.

Of the four Raphaels which he describes, he mentions three as having been in the possession of Francis I., and the fourth as having belonged to Henry *le Grand*.

Of the pictures by Leonardo which he mentions, the *Mona Lisa* is stated to have been acquired by Francis I.; but nothing is said as to how or when any of the others came to form part of the Royal collection.

Since the time of Francis I. the collection had been added to under every subsequent monarch.

The testimony of Père Dan, like that of Cassiano del Pozzo, consequently only establishes that the Louvre picture formed part of the Royal collection at the date of his description. It may have belonged to Francis I.,



[Royal Library, Windsor

NEPTUNE
STUDY FOR A PICTURE

New Gallery Portfolio]



but the fact of it occurring in these inventories is not evidence that it did.

The picture in the National Gallery is described by Lomazzo in 1584, it being then in the Chapel of the Conception in the Church of S. Francesco at Milan. It was removed from the church in 1777; sold for thirty ducats to an English collector; was afterwards in the Earl of Suffolk's collection, from which it was acquired for the National Gallery.

The external evidence commences in the case of the one picture in 1625, of the other in 1584.

The earliest record of the composition is a petition discovered in the Milanese State Archives, and first published in 1893 in the Arch. Stor. Lomb. XX. It is addressed to the Duke by "Johanne Ambrosio preda et Leonardo de Vinci Florentino," asking that he should intervene in the matter of their contract with the brotherhood of the Conception of S. Francesco at Milan to make an altar-piece of figures in relief covered with fine gold; a picture of the Madonna in oils; and two pictures of two angels, also in oils. They state that they have already incurred in expenses the whole amount fixed on as their remuneration by the brotherhood, who have valued at twenty-five ducats the said Madonna in oils, "by the said Florentine," although the list of expenses proves it to be worth a hundred ducats, and this sum has been offered for it by would-be purchasers.

Their request is that the Duke should compel the brotherhood either to pay a proper price, re-valuing the picture upon oath, or abiding by the decision of experts properly appointed, or to restore the said Madonna painted in oil to the said petitioners.

We do not know whether the Duke did anything or nothing, or whether the upshot was that the brotherhood restored the picture, or kept the picture and paid an additional sum, or kept the picture and did not pay more than they had agreed upon, or who were the would-be purchasers who had offered more.

The petition lends no colour to any suppositions on these points. Its tone does not suggest any superabundant confidence in the minds of the petitioners that there would be any reply at all.

There are fragments of other petitions from Leonardo to Ludovic, referring to arrears of his salary, but no record of their having been acceded to.

The importance of the petition lies not in what may be conjectured from it, but in what it states, viz., that at the time at which it was presented—which a document¹ still more recently discovered in the Milanese Archives belonging to the same suit would fix as between 1491 and 1494—a picture of the Madonna by Leonardo had been executed for, and had passed into the possession of, the monks of S. Francesco at Milan. Consequently, although there is no direct evidence of identity, the most natural interpretation of the document is that it is a strong piece of testimony of the authenticity of the picture which was in the church of S. Francesco in 1584, at which time it was described by Lomazzo as a characteristic work by Leonardo.

It remains to consider the pictures themselves.

Less easy to detail are the steps leading up to the conclusions which follow from their study.

A visual impression is tested by comparison of detail, by

¹ Given in "Rassegna d'Arte" for July, 1901.

time, by the light of reflection, and then what remains of it is reconstructed by some unconscious thought-process, and given the vitality, the comparative impenetrability of a conviction! The greater the genius the more he will burst through these trammels of conclusions when the critic has raised his puny fabric, and down the cards tumble! Tentative in case of Leonardo is the grounded inference. Yet surely the Louvre picture bears the unmistakable impress of Leonardo's hand! It is comparatively early work. It is far nearer in date of execution to the *Adoration* than to any of his later works. Wherever painted, it is Florentine in spirit and in treatment.

It reveals Leonardo as still deeply imbued with Verrocchiesque tradition, differing in some greater sense of atmosphere, but occupied for the most part in the endeavour to attain effects which were the common aim of the painters who frequented Verrocchio's *bottega*. The head of the Madonna is in type and treatment purely Florentine.

It is the most wistful, the most virginal, the tenderest representation in his altarpieces. It is exclusively to the works of the Florentine *Quattrocentisti*, Botticelli, Lorenzo di Credi, and, in a lesser degree, Perugino and Fra Filippo Lippi, that the mind recurs in the endeavour to parallel the impression its charm produces. The type, as theirs, lives in a world imaged and seen in vision, far removed from the stress of things actual. The light from behind is flooding the grotto with radiance and playing among the ripples of the hair, but the face has no primary suggestion either of sunlight or shadow. Its lineage is with the supreme representations of pure form. In the herbage of the foreground a botanist might identify and

give a name to every flower and leaf. Of Florentine artists only Botticelli and Lorenzo di Credi occur as parallels, as having showed the like patient care in the delineation of plants.

The hard outlines of the basaltic rocks recall those in the *Baptism* in the Accademia. The fissures in the cleft above the head of the Madonna have a distinctness which makes the whole background seem nearer.

Time has caused the flesh tints to darken considerably, and has thus enhanced this archaism of feeling in proportion as the whole seems nearer to one vertical plane.

The grouping is akin to the more intimate conception customary in the tondo and small altarpiece with which the name of Lorenzo di Credi is primarily associated.

The general similarity in composition with that of Perugino's *Holy Family* in the Museum at Nancy, most marked in the figures of the Madonna and S. John, suggests that the genesis of the picture may be a drawing made when he frequented Verrocchio's studio, where according to Vasari, Perugino was his fellow-pupil. Whether actually as pupil or no Perugino certainly frequented the studio. An old rhyme couples the names of the two students:

Due giovin par d'etate e par d'amori
Leonardo da Vinci e'l Perusino
Pier della Pieve ch'è un divin pittore.

The angel has been extensively repainted. In its present state it is difficult to reconcile the easy, restful pose of head and arms with the angle at which the body is leaning forward. The right foot, indistinct, but in part visible, seems out of drawing, and I doubt if it is Leonardo's work. Just above it grows a tuft of flowers which



Alinari photo]

[Accademia, Venice

STUDIES FOR THE "BATTLE OF ANGHIARI"

is seen to continue through the gauze drapery of the angel's sleeve. It is hard to understand the position of the part of the right arm which is not visible.

The picture in the National Gallery has not been carried to the same degree of finish as that in the Louvre. There is designedly less elaboration of detail. The herbage is scant and, moreover, rough and uninteresting. The facets of the rock are less sharply defined.

On the other hand the picture seems to possess a greater unity. The air passes through the grotto more freely. The light falls less fitfully, and the effect of its incidence on the kneeling figures is more harmonious and sustained. The result is, on the whole, more reverential. It is for the excellence of its disposition of light and shade that Lomazzo singles out the picture as a supreme example of the artist, the critic's sanity of judgment being shown by his citing the same characteristic in the *Io* and the *Danaë* of Correggio. Its luminosity is, in fact, its distinguishing quality.

Despite the relative lack of finish as compared with the Louvre picture, the modelling of the heads of the Virgin and the Angel is carried further; it approaches more nearly to the standard set in the "Trattato," "that your light and shade blend without strokes and borders, looking like smoke."

The whole picture shows greater smoothness and facility of touch. The artist seems to have worked more rapidly. It lacks something of the hesitance associated with primary conception. It is a question of degree whether the possession of these qualities must be held to denote it a work by Leonardo himself, or whether the facility of execution is attained by a pupil. I believe the former to

be substantially, though not entirely the case. The whole of the composition is Leonardo's.

Where most differing from the Louvre picture, in the figure of the angel, the idealized refinement of the conception, and the delicacy of texture of the sleeve of the arm, seem to me essential proofs of its authenticity.

The execution is apparently in part the work of another hand, and that not of a pupil whose individuality was absorbed in that of Leonardo, but of one who, having learned his art in the earlier school of Milan, changed his method very little in his association with the greater painter, the result showing most perceptibly in the leaden flesh colouring and the opaqueness of the *entourage*.

The native painters of Milan never became Florentine in method. It was the greater genius which proved the more assimilative. Leonardo's art had wrested from that of Vincenzo Foppa and Ambrogio Borgognone the secret of its strength, and had become its supreme logical development before the Milanese painters became his followers.

The difference in the position of the hands in the two pictures is of itself an index of the order of their composition.

In the Louvre picture the hand of the Madonna and that of the angel are seen one above the other in a vertical line above the figure of Christ.

The hand of the Madonna is extended in a very unusual manner. The fingers are held as widely apart as possible, and are seen coming forward in almost complete foreshortening.

The figure of God the Father was hardly ever represented in Art before the twelfth century, his presence



[Buda-Pesth Gallery

STUDY OF HEADS FOR COMBATANTS IN "THE BATTLE
OF ANGHIARI"

being intimated by a hand. After the twelfth century the hand still remained the customary symbol of the presence of God the Father. It was represented either in the act of blessing or bestowing, being in the latter case "entirely open and darting rays from each finger as though it were a living sun,"¹ the rays being symbolic of the grace and favour shed forth by God upon the earth.

This so exactly describes the attitude of the hand of the Virgin that I cannot believe it to be merely a coincidence that it should extend thus over the head of Christ. Leonardo has placed the outstretched hand in this position as a symbol of the presence of God the Father.

In the earlier representations of the Trinity the presence of the Father is customarily revealed by a hand only, of the Son by the Cross, the Lamb or the human form, and of the Holy Ghost by the dove, the symbols being grouped either vertically or horizontally. The spirit of symbolism was a living thing seeking new garments. From the tenth to the end of the sixteenth century the figure of a man was used as an alternative symbol for the Holy Ghost.

The hand of the angel with outstretched forefinger is exactly in the position in which the dove would appear in a vertical representation of the Trinity. Above it is the symbol of God the Father, below it is God the Son.

I cannot find an instance of the use in Art of the forefinger as a symbol of the Third Person of the Trinity, but the symbol is not unknown in literature. In the hymn attributed to Charlemagne in honour of the Holy Spirit, "*Veni Creator Spiritus*," he invokes it as "*Dextrae Dei tu digitus*," "finger of the hand of God." There perhaps

¹ Didron, "*Christian Iconography*," p. 201.

is a possible suggestion of such use in Art in the Byzantine Guide to Painting in the inscription for the representation of the Holy Spirit. "He which proceedeth from the Father," in conjunction with the use of the hand to represent the Father.

May not Leonardo have been attempting, by the use of such a symbol in lieu of the dove, to represent the Trinity in the position of the two hands above Christ? His symbolism, in contrast with that of the Byzantines and the Primitives, is the less readily apparent because veiled in natural action.

But in this case the action is not entirely natural, and its real meaning being obscure,—some of "those people of importance" doubtless remarking how eminently Leonardesque it was to make the angel point at S. John—Leonardo, therefore, dissatisfied with the result, lowered the angel's hand in the composition of the National Gallery picture so that both hands support Christ, and altered the position of the hand of the Madonna so that it is no longer as though "darting rays from each finger," but the fingers held more together are turned aside with a natural gesture.

It is not possible to determine the precise date of composition of either picture. But internal evidence may be held to prove that the Louvre picture if not painted in Florence was painted very soon after Leonardo's arrival in Milan. Mr. Herbert P. Horne has made the very interesting suggestion of its identity with the altar-piece which both the "Anonimo Fiorentino" and Vasari state was painted at the request of Ludovic, and afterwards sent by the Duke as a present to the Emperor. Vasari adds that the subject was a Nativity. The description,



P 732

Philpot photo

EARLY FLEMISH DRAWING OF THE "BATTLE OF ANGIARI"
(THE FIGHT FOR THE STANDARD)

[Uffizi Gallery, Florence]

12028
though loose, is perhaps sufficiently accurate in view of the fact that it is hardly possible that Vasari can ever have seen the picture.

Fragments of letters by Leonardo reveal that the Duke was not a good paymaster, and that in consequence the artist was forced to take other commissions whereby he could earn money.

"It vexes me greatly that having to earn my living has forced me to interrupt the work and to attend to small matters, instead of following up the work which your lordship entrusted to me. But I hope in a short time to have earned so much that I may carry it out quietly to the satisfaction of your Excellency."¹ . . .

So also in the fragments of the torn letter² written when all work for the Duke has been at a standstill, he says that he has been working to gain his living.

To such a necessity we may most reasonably attribute his association with Ambrogio de Predis in the contract with the brotherhood of S. Francesco.

The stern facts of his penury revealed in his letters may be held to countervail against any hypothetical considerations of the improbability of his ever painting two pictures which greatly resemble each other in composition.

For the commission for the monks of S. Francesco I believe the picture in the National Gallery to have been the original picture executed and placed in the Church, where it remained and where Lomazzo saw it. It was sufficiently the work of Leonardo to be described as such in the petition made by the two artists, the description not however precluding what the association of the two names would suggest and internal evidence confirms, viz.,

¹ C. A., 315 v.; R., 1344.

² C. A., 335 v.

that Ambrogio de Predis assisted Leonardo in the later stages of its composition. Neither the side panels of the angels nor the signed portrait by him in the National Gallery, nor his portraits in Milan, at all favour the supposition of his share in the picture having been other than purely subsidiary.

A picture in the parochial church at Affori has recently been put forward in certain Milanese art periodicals as the original of both pictures. It seems to be a good contemporary copy.

It follows the composition of the picture in the National Gallery rather than that in the Louvre in every detail in which the two differ, except in the attitude of the left hand of the Virgin.

A drawing in the Ambrosiana of the child Christ and the head of the angel has a marked similarity with it, and is perhaps a preparatory sketch from the National Gallery picture made by the painter of the Affori copy.

In some details it suggests the hand of Luini—especially in the finer oval of the faces,—the same difference being seen in the Royal Academy Cartoon of S. Anne and the picture in the Ambrosiana which Luini painted from it,—in the lower part of the face being thrown more in shadow by the way the chin recedes, in the height to which the parting of the hair is visible—as in the Madonna at Hertford House,—and in the more simple treatment of the hair massed together. The smaller size of the picture causes the figures to be only half life-size. This also is characteristic of Luini, who obtained his most charming effects with figures in this scale.

The fresco of the *Last Supper* in the Refectory of S. Maria delle Grazie is the only other existing work of

those which he did in Milan in the time of Ludovic Sforza. By far the most rapidly executed of any of his important commissions, it was commenced in 1496 and was practically if not altogether completed by February, 1498.

Matteo Bandello, then a youth aged about seventeen, was a member of this convent, and in the prologue to No. 58 of Part I. of the "Novelle," he has described the artist at work upon the fresco:

"It was his habit from sunrise until dusk never to lay down his brush, but forgetful alike of eating or drinking to paint without intermission. At other times he would let two, three, or four days pass without touching the picture, remaining before it for an hour or two hours of the day, but only in order that he might take counsel with himself by contemplating and examining and judging the figures.

"I have also seen him, as the caprice or whim took him, at mid-day, when the sun was in Leo, set out from the Corte Vecchia, where he was at work on the clay model of the colossal horse, and go straight to Le Grazie, and mounting the scaffolding, take up his brush and give one or two touches to one of the figures, and then abruptly go away again."

The prologue further relates a conversation which took place in the Refectory between Leonardo and Cardinal Gurk, in the course of which Leonardo stated that his salary from the Duke was 2,000 ducats, supplemented by generous daily gifts. The Cardinal retired in astonishment, and Leonardo afterwards told the bystanders the story of Fra Filippo Lippi when taken captive by the Moors gaining his freedom by the use of his art. The story which Bandello repeats, and which Vasari also relates need not detain us, and as Leonardo's salary was not paid its amount is comparatively immaterial. But

the description of Leonardo at work, alternating between periods of extreme activity and of contemplation, seems to bear every mark of authenticity, and is professedly the statement of an eye-witness.

Of the anecdotes as to the heads of Christ and Judas as much cannot be said. The story of the Prior's importunity and his two interviews with the Duke, and Leonardo's offer to paint him as Judas, is an addition in Vasari's Second Edition (1568), his source being presumably Giraldi (*Discorso*, etc., 1553), who was told the story by his father. Vasari adds that the head of Christ was unfinished. The reason of this in the form of Zenale's advice to Leonardo, that it was better so, for he could not surpass the majesty of certain of the Apostle's heads, is given in Lomazzo's "*Trattato*" (1585), and Zenale's advice somewhat typifies the expanding nature of these anecdotes. Leonardo never reached the perilous height of satisfaction with his work. It was always unfinished. The head of Christ was only more so than the rest, as the subject the more demanded.

The problem of how the composition should be represented had long been present to his mind. At Florence the conception germinated. The formalism of arrangement requisite to represent thirteen figures seated at a table had caused the subject to offer apparently but little scope for the introduction of natural action. It is noticeably absent in the examples by Giotto and his immediate followers. That by Andrea del Castagno in *S. Apollonia*—gaunt rugged men from the hand of a painter who loved strength above all things and delighted to portray it—has more attempt at vigour of expression, but it is not united by any bond of feeling. The figures furthest

away are quite outside the action of the moment. It is the only one of the earlier examples which exercised a perceptible influence upon the work of Leonardo.

If the group of seated figures on the same sheet as the studies for the *Adoration* in the Louvre be indeed a preparatory study for the *Last Supper*, then the fact that in this earliest sketch the grouping of the figures is the most dramatic may be in part due to the feeling that Andrea's vigour lost a part of its due impressiveness by reason of its formalism and lack of unity.

The drawing is connected with the painting by M. Müntz and Mr. Berenson. According to the latter it represents the moment when Christ announces that one of the Disciples shall betray Him, and the sketch on the same page, in which the figure of Christ is seen pointing to the dish, shows that Leonardo "repented of the too eloquent attitude of the Christ and repented at once."

The other figures help the attribution, or certainly do not forbid it. That to the right seems naturally to suggest S. John. The one beyond springing up has some resemblance to the head in a similar position in the sketch at Venice for the whole composition, although the action there is much modified. The figure on the extreme left, who has buried his face in his hands may also be the characterization of an Apostle. But so complete is the contrast between the two sketches on the same sheet, the one of Christ pointing to the dish and the "too eloquent attitude" above of the figure talking earnestly, gesticulating with his left hand, while with his right he presses the hand of the man next to him, that I do not feel convinced that the latter is intended for Christ, and if it is not, the group of five is so self-centred that it is by no

means certain that it is a study for the *Last Supper*. In any case the two sketches for the whole composition, the drawing at Windsor,¹ a rough, confused sketch with Christ and S. John repeated with greater distinctness, and the drawing in red chalk at Venice, although presumably of later date than the drawing in the Louvre, are much nearer to the old traditions of representation. In both, as in Andrea del Castagno's fresco, Judas is on the nearer side of the table, and S. John is bent entirely down over the table. The Windsor drawing follows Andrea in that S. John lies across the bosom of Christ. In the Venice study, which is undoubtedly the later of the two, his arms lie on the table, and his head is buried in them. The figure of Christ in the right-hand sketch at Windsor bears a very considerable resemblance to that in Andrea's fresco, and is nearer also to the attitude finally adopted than either the sketch in the Louvre pointing to the dish, or that in the drawing at Venice. The latter is curiously timid and tentative in the delineation of the central figures, in contrast with the firm, bold treatment of the Apostles. The head of Simon might serve as a study for the fresco itself. The rest underwent change, but they are already a company stirred by one impulse, swaying with life.

At the date of the Venice drawing he had not as yet finally decided on the precise moment of the action to be represented. The table is seen more from above, so that the figure of Judas is lower, and no longer, as in Andrea's fresco, awkwardly breaks the line of the Apostles, but the juxtaposition of the figure with that of Christ, whose hand is extended over the dish, while that of Judas

¹ R., Pl. XLV.

is half extended and, as it were, half drawn back, is the moment of the second speech of Christ: "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me." The moment isolates the two figures. The treachery of Judas is apparent to all.

Leonardo's final choice was of the moment immediately after Christ's first speech: "Verily I say unto you that one of you shall betray me;" when its effect is seen in the amazement of the Apostles, asking, asseverating, as yet unconscious who it shall be. The final conception isolates the figure of Christ. The slightness of the central figures of the Venice drawing serves almost to foreshadow the change. By what arrested action he proposed to express the amazement caused by Christ's words is seen in the characterizations of ten of the Apostles in the MS. at South Kensington, which Dr. Richter considers to have been written in 1494-5:¹

"One who was drinking has left the glass in its position, and turned his head towards the speaker. Another, twisting the fingers of his hands together, turns with stern brows to his companion. Another, with hands spread open and showing the palms, shrugs his shoulders up to his ears, and makes a mouth of astonishment. Another speaks into his neighbour's ear, and he who listens to him turns towards him and lends an ear, holding a knife in one hand and in the other the bread half cut through by the knife. Another in turning, holding a knife in his hand, upsets with his hand a glass over the table. Another lays his hand on the table and is looking. Another breathes hard from full mouth. Another leans forward to see the speaker, shading his eyes with his hand. Another draws back behind the one who leans forward, and sees the speaker between the wall and the man who is leaning."

¹ R., 665, 666.

The Apostle shading his eyes with his hand is only found in the Windsor drawing, but in general the resemblances in these descriptions are rather with the fresco than with the drawings. They are not exactly reproduced. The differences of detail are obvious by a comparison; but in more than half these descriptions the resemblance is such as to admit of instant identification. It would result that at the date of these notes following on the sequence of preparatory drawings the conception was in great measure complete. He needed only the opportunity for its composition. This to some extent explains the rapidity of its execution.

Among the drawings at Windsor are studies in red chalk for the heads of S. Matthew and of Judas, a sketch of the drapery for the arm of S. Peter, and a study for the head of S. Philip in black chalk. The last is of almost incomparable beauty; the whole profile seems quivering with life, so eager is the protestation of the parted lips, so intense the welling passion of the eye.

With this drawing as index of his power, the contrast pointed out by Dr. Richter with the pastel in the Brera for the head of Christ becomes luminous. The latter in its present state is none of his, whatever its inception may have been, and of that it is impossible to judge. A drawing in red chalk at Windsor, which I believe to be a study for S. James the Greater, is discussed in treating of the studies for the Anghiari combatants, with which it has been connected.

Of the painting itself it is hard to dis sever what is still from what once was. The vitality of what is left is so potent that the imagination will perforce attempt to reconstruct. The space composition is simple. The side



Alinari photo]

[Accademia, Venice

STUDY FOR THE "VIRGIN AND CHILD WITH S. ANNE"

Plate 36

walls seen in the picture continue the walls of the refectory, so that the long table at which the figures are sitting is intended to have the effect of being in the room. The Apostles on either side of Christ are drawn together into groups of three. Natural action has completely veiled the method of the arrangement, its result being to avoid the formalism of his prototypes and to isolate the figure of Christ. The latter effect is heightened by the fact that in what is apparently the end wall of the refectory Leonardo has represented three windows opening out on a landscape of hill and meadow, and in the central window the head of Christ is aureoled in light. The arched cornice above and the moulding round it give it something of the appearance of an altar-piece. The calm serenity of the Christ is in expressive contrast to the action of the Apostles, of which only Goethe has succeeded in trans-fusing into words some measure of the intensity.

Dramatic and inevitable is his interpretation of Philip's look, as if saying "Lord, I am not he. Thou knowest it, thou seest my pure heart,—I am not he!"; and of James the Greater as "drawing back in terror with arms spread out, and gazing with head bent down, like one who already imagines that he sees before him the horror that he hears"; or his instancing the convulsive movement of the left arm of Judas as an index of his terror when Peter, who leans across to urge John to ask who is the traitor, touches his side with the haft of a knife which he is holding.

These are not a poet's imaginings. Goethe's attitude is rather that of the scientific observer.

It has been repainted so often that it is impossible that there can be an inch that has not been covered by the

brush of the restorer. But surely some of the later work has proved the less durable, has melted like snow from off the face of the deep!

Despite all the threnodies as to its condition, it is more than a mere ruin. How much more is in part evident by the comparison with the copies of it made by Solario and Marco d'Oggionno which are now in the Refectory.

It still shows greater freedom in execution. The impressiveness, far transcending theirs, is not entirely a matter of suggestion or association.

The colour can give no indication of the original. But where may be found in the art of Italy previous to this a more perfect plastic treatment of the human form than is still perceptible to have been that of James the Greater, starting back in horror with hands flung out as though to beat away the thought from him? Where else, save in Leonardo's own works, do we find hands so wrought to be a palpable index to the spirit as in the hands of Peter, the left hand of Christ, the left hand of Matthew, and the hands of Simon?

The gesture is inevitable. It is the issue of the action depicted, and his representation of it is so free, so exact, as to make all his preceding work seem almost tentative by contrast.

The *Last Supper* first revealed the plenitude of Leonardo's power, and still reveals it, imperfectly, yet as fully as any existing work save the *Mona Lisa*. So supreme is the art that its structure does not intervene at all between the thought and its translation.

The *Last Supper* was painted with an oil medium; the choice being no doubt partly due to the enhanced subtilty of effect which it offered, partly to the fact that the



[*The Louvre*]

VIRGIN AND CHILD WITH S. ANNE

urgency imposed by the conditions of painting in fresco would have been utterly alien to his methods.

It is impossible to say how far its rapid deterioration has been due to the damp of its situation, and how far to error in the composition of the ground surface. There is, however, very little room for doubt that, as in the case of the Anghiari picture, Leonardo's experimental chemistry proved an ill friend to the durability of his own works.

He obtained his surface, according to Goethe, first by a mixture of mastic, pitch, and other ingredients laid on to the plaster of the wall with a hot iron, the whole being then covered by a thin coating of white lead mixed with fine yellow argillaceous earth, which latter covering proved its undoing; for it remained intact only for so long as the colours laid on contained sufficient nourishment to feed it; as the oil dried up the surface cracked, and the moisture of the wall then forced its way through.

The date of the occurrence may be confined within a narrow compass. Paolo Giovio, writing in 1527, says, "in admiratione tamen est Mediolani in pariete Christus cum discipulis discumbens." It would follow that in 1527 it was practically intact. It was seen in 1556 by G. B. Armenino,¹ who refers to it in his work, "*Dei veri Precetti della Pittura*" (1587), as although half ruined,² yet seeming a miracle in the manner it represented the expression of the Apostles. Vasari, in referring to a copy made by Fra Gerolamo Monsignori, speaks of himself as "having seen this year, 1566, in Milan, the original by Leonardo,

¹ Uzielli (1896), p. 243.

² "Abbenchè fosse fino d'allora mezzo guasto."

in such bad condition that one can distinguish nothing more than a confused blur."¹

The deterioration had, therefore, begun previous to 1556, when Armenino saw it, and in the ten years between the date of his visit and that of Vasari its progress had been considerable.

In 1652 the monks cut away the portion containing the feet of Christ and of some of the Apostles, in order to make a new door into the Refectory.

In 1726 and 1770 it suffered from very drastic restoration.

In 1796 the orders of Bonaparte that no military quarters be established there and no damage be done were disregarded by the General left in command. The Refectory was used as a stable by the French soldiers, who pelted the Apostles with clods of clay, the traces of which are still visible on the walls. It was subsequently used by them as a magazine for storing hay.

During a great flood in 1800 the water stood over two feet deep in the Refectory and the painting became entirely covered with mould.

Seven years later, under the orders of Eugene Beauharnais, Viceroy of Italy, the Refectory was dried, the floor raised, and the foundation of it strengthened as far as possible against the recurrence of damp.

As a result the condition of the painting gradually improved, and Goethe bears witness that parts of it became much more distinct.

Attempts were made in 1820 and 1854 to remove the work of the restorers of the preceding century which had

¹ "Tanto male condotto, che non si scorge più se non una macchia abbagliata."

probably been of some use in protecting the surface during its ill-usage.

Its later history has been without incident. Imperceptibly but gradually the plaster disintegrates and falls away.

The commission to paint Madonna Lisa was given to Leonardo by Francesco del Giocondo, she being his third wife and a member of the Neapolitan family of the Gherardini.

No preparatory drawings are known to exist.

A half-length in black chalk of a nude at Chantilly is of the same figure, but lacks the quality of modelling of Leonardo's work, and the difference of pose forbids any direct connection with a study for the Louvre picture.

A drawing of hands at Windsor has, I think, been without reason connected with the picture.

The drawing is undoubtedly by Leonardo, but the position of the hands is entirely different; the greater angularity of the type of hand and the tightness of treatment suggest its date as of the first Florentine period or the early years at Milan.

The portrait was one of the first commissions after Leonardo's return to Florence, commenced according to Milanesi and M. Ravaisson-Mollien in 1500. Vasari speaks of his lingering over it for four years and leaving it unfinished; but as this period included his term of service under Caesar Borgia, he can only have worked on it intermittently. The picture, both Vasari and Lomazzo state, was acquired by Francis I., and was at Fontainebleau. Since then it has remained in the Royal Collection, ultimately the National Collection of the Louvre.

Cassiano del Pozzo described the picture in 1625 as in bad condition, but was enthusiastic about the beauty of the face and hands. He tells how the Duke of Buckingham, when sent as escort to bring Charles's bride Henrietta Maria to England, expressed a desire to have the picture, and how the King was only prevented from giving it to him by the remonstrances of those who considered that he would be sending out of the kingdom the most beautiful picture that he possessed. The marriage referred to took place in the same year as Cassiano del Pozzo's visit to Fontainebleau, and consequently the Duke of Buckingham's doings would be very recent gossip—which is the weightiest construction that the story will bear. As such it anticipates succinctly the consensus of opinion of later criticism. Indeed, the beauty of the picture is so stimulating, the art so supreme, as not readily to find utterance other than in terms of hyperbole. As M. Gruyer has said: "*Voilà quatre siècles bientôt que Mona Lisa fait perdre la tête à tous ceux qui parlent d'elle, après l'avoir longtemps regardée.*"

Of all his pictures it is carried farthest in degree of finish, and Vasari's statement as to its incompleteness can only mean that Leonardo was still unsatisfied, that he never gave it what were designedly the last touches.

The portrait, as offering a field freer in some respects than the defined figure compositions of sacred art, afforded in consequence a more single approach for the revelation of his individuality. The result is so unique as to convey no suggestion of comparison. There are no preparatory drawings, but the precepts laid down in passages of the "*Trattato*" almost seem in a special



Philpot photo]

[Royal Gallery, Turin

STUDY OF A HEAD CROWNED WITH LAUREL

sense the preliminaries for it. It embodies in practice his investigations in the laws of aerial perspective, of the gradation of light and shade, and how that "they should blend without lines or borders in the manner of smoke."

This effect of softness of contour is the distinguishing characteristic of his later work.

In reading the passage on "the selection of such light as gives most grace to faces," which says that a portrait should be taken in dull weather or at dusk, and in which he speaks of noticing at such hour and with such conditions the peculiar grace and delicacy of the faces of men and women whom he passes in the street, do we not feel that this was the hour chosen? That just as to add a few touches he would go, Bandello says, at mid-day to the Refectory of the Grazie, so the hour at the fall of evening, when the light had a peculiar mystery of suggestion, was the hour at which he painted *Mona Lisa*?

She is represented sitting in front of a marble balcony. The left arm rests on the arm of the seat, and the fingers fold over the end of it. The right hand, perhaps the most perfect hand ever painted, lies lightly over the left hand and wrist. On sleeves and bodice the pleats of the satin dress take the light, and worked along the braid, as it were a sign manual of the artist, is one of the interlacing patterns such as occur on pages of the "*Codice Atlantico*."

The curling auburn hair escaping at either side from the veil, and just brushing the bosom as it falls, has perhaps the most resemblance to the earlier work. The eyes look out at you, gray, devoid alike of eyelash or eye-

brow, heavy-lidded, languorous yet strangely intent. The face is full and of a southern type, and the lips are smiling. She was listening to music while he painted, so Vasari tells us. Beyond the balcony a strip of herbage has a warm russet glow, and road and river wind away on either side in labyrinthine coils amidst the fretted rocks to where, in the far distance, shadows are deep and still water lies among the hills.

Each and all of his landscape backgrounds have, as common type, the waterways of the Friulian Alps. But the result, as here conceived, is instinct with the spirit of pure romance. Never did water wind around the rocks so fitfully or hills thus tremble in foam-flung mirage!

Thus, on the very confines of fantasy, and girt about with the suggestions of strange lights and furtive shadows he has created in this portrait of Madonna Lisa, third wife of a Florentine official, a myth—of the embodiment of which men dream as of the eternal enigma of womanhood.

The studies for the composition of the *Madonna with S. Anne* show the progress of two quite distinct conceptions.

In the one of these which reached its ultimate stage of execution in the cartoon now in the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy, the heads of the Virgin and of S. Anne are on the same level, and Christ is in the lap of the Virgin, and being held in her arms is bending over towards S. John.

In that followed in the Louvre picture the head of S. Anne is the apex of a triangle, and the Virgin is bending down holding Christ, who is on the ground fondling a lamb.

The only motive recurring in both is that the Virgin is seated in the lap of S. Anne.

Three drawings preserve the connection of the two compositions in the embryonic stages.

One in the British Museum—a pen-drawing washed with Indian ink—is a preliminary study for the Academy Cartoon.

The head of the Virgin is distinctly more in profile in the drawing, and the kneeling figure of S. John is bending forward at a sharper angle, but with these exceptions and the omission of the raised hand of S. Anne the drawing closely resembles the Cartoon in every important detail of composition.

Below, on the same sheet, are three sketches for the same composition—two of the Virgin and Child, the third of the Child.

Very closely connected with this is the drawing in the Louvre (His de la Salle Collection, No. 120) in black chalk, gone over with the pen, which Mr. Berenson considers as denoting a stage between the Cartoon and the Louvre picture. The heads of the Virgin and S. Anne are practically level. Christ, held in the Virgin's arms, turns to the right and looks at S. Anne. There may be a fourth figure representing S. John in the same position as in the Cartoon, but the condition of the drawing is so bad that one cannot speak with any degree of certainty.

The composition of the Louvre picture is clearly foreshadowed in the pen-drawing at Venice. The girlish figure of the Virgin is seen completely in profile, and it is lowered half a head below that of S. Anne. The Child is held in her lap, but is bending down over a

lamb. Another head in profile immediately above that of Christ seems to be a re-casting of the attitude of the head of the Virgin as more bending forward, and represents an intermediate stage between the attitude in the drawing and in the Louvre picture. The landscape background roughly indicates the outlines of that in the Louvre picture.

The three drawings suggest the priority of the conception followed in the Academy Cartoon. Where the Venice drawing approximates to the Louvre picture it seems a divergence from an earlier type.

This conclusion derives some support from a comparison of the two compositions.

In the Cartoon the figure of S. Anne is almost completely hidden behind that of the Virgin, and the result has almost the appearance of two heads growing from a single trunk. In the picture the attitudes of the two figures are quite naturally separated, that of S. Anne being already arrived at in the Venice drawing, but not as yet that of the Virgin.

The fact that in the Venice drawing Christ is in the lap of the Virgin, and that the lamb is necessarily very large for Christ to be able to reach to fondle it, suggests the priority of the conception with S. John to that with the lamb.

On April 3rd, 1501, Fra Pietro da Nuvolaria wrote to Isabella d'Este of Leonardo:

"He has made only one cartoon since he came to Florence. It represents Christ as a child of about one year old slipping out of his mother's arms and taking hold of a lamb and embracing it. His mother, who is almost getting up out of the lap of S. Anne, holds the child to pull him away from the



New Gallery Portfolio]

[*Royal Library, Windsor*

STUDIES FOR THE HEAD OF LEDA

lamb, which is the sacrificial animal signifying the Passion. S. Anne half rising from her seat seems to wish to restrain her daughter from parting the child from the lamb, and this is perhaps meant to represent the Church, which would not wish the Passion of Christ to be hindered.

"The figures are life-size, but the cartoon is a small one because they are all either sitting or bending down, and on the left one is represented in front of the other. The sketch is not finished."

A cartoon, corresponding in composition to the Louvre picture in all essential details in which it differs from the Academy Cartoon, except in the expression of S. Anne, was therefore already in existence in April, 1501.

Was this the second cartoon on the subject made since the return to Florence? Or was the Academy Cartoon already in existence before Leonardo left Milan? Or was the Academy Cartoon produced later, and did Leonardo afterwards revert to the first cartoon, or produce a third closely approaching to it from which subsequently the Louvre picture was derived?

I am disposed to believe from internal evidence that the Academy Cartoon represents the earlier form of the composition, and if this be so, whether produced in Milan or Florence, it must have been in existence previous to April, 1501.

Vasari's testimony is that on Leonardo's return to Florence, Filippino Lippi resigned in his favour a commission to paint an altar-piece for the Servite monks, and that after considerable delay he prepared a cartoon with the Madonna, S. Anne and the infant Christ so admirable that it was the sensation of Florence. He describes the cartoon in detail. The description of the

Virgin, as "filled with joy and gladness as she contemplates the beauty of her son, whom she is tenderly supporting in her lap," can only refer to the composition of the Academy Cartoon.

With equal definiteness the sentence which follows, "Our Lady, with eyes modestly bent down, is looking at a little S. John who is playing with a lamb," refers to a composition similar to the Louvre picture, although the Child is here called S. John instead of Christ.

Vasari had not seen the cartoon which he states had gone to France. He seems to have placed together two different descriptions of different cartoons, either not realizing the discrepancy, or else, as he thought, reconciling it, by substituting S. John for Christ in the second description, and so avoiding describing Christ as both seated in the lap of the Virgin and as playing with the lamb.

In treating of Leonardo's life in France, Vasari says the King wished him to carry out in colour the cartoon of S. Anne, but he kept him for long waiting with nothing but words. However, the Cardinal of Aragon, on visiting the painter at Amboise in October, 1517, was shown three pictures, "*tutti perfettissimi*," one of these being "the Madonna and Child who are seated in the lap of S. Anne," and Paolo Giovio mentions a picture by Leonardo of the infant Christ playing with the Virgin and S. Anne, which had been acquired by Francis I. If this be the Louvre picture it subsequently passed out of the Royal Collection, for the S. Anne in the Louvre was acquired by Richelieu in Italy and brought to France in 1629, and from that time its history is unbroken.

As for the cartoons, Billi and the "Anonimo Fiorentino" cite among the "disegni maravigliosi" one of the Madonna and S. Anne which went to France, and Lomazzo says the same of a cartoon of S. Anne, adding that it was then (in 1585) in Milan in the possession of Aurelio Luini, but it is impossible to say which composition is referred to.

Probably Leonardo had the Academy Cartoon with him when he returned to Milan in the service of Louis XII. It was at Milan presumably that Luini made the copy in colour, with the addition of S. Joseph, which is now in the Ambrosiana.

The figure of the Virgin is also exactly repeated in a *Pomona and Vertumnus* at Berlin, ascribed to Francesco Melzi, who, however, from his close association with Leonardo, might have had access to the cartoon either in Milan or at Amboise.

Mr. Marks, who has gathered together all that is known of the cartoons, has shown that in all probability the Academy Cartoon is that referred to by the Padre Resta, at the end of the seventeenth century, as in the possession of the Arconati family at Milan, whither it came from Pompeo Leoni's collection in 1610.

It subsequently passed into the Casnedi Collection, where it was seen together with the cartoons of the Apostles' heads, now at Weimar, by an English traveller in 1721. The collection was purchased by Robert Udny, British Consul at Venice from 1760 to 1766, and the cartoons of the Apostles' heads were sent by him to London and were acquired by Sir Thomas Lawrence. The presumption is a strong one, that he also sent the cartoon of S. Anne, and that it then passed into the

possession of the Royal Academy. A Minute of the Council of the Academy, dated March 23rd, 1791, gives directions for its proper preservation.

The Cartoon is an entirely characteristic work of the middle period—that period of the full maturity of his art which opened with the *Last Supper* and closed with the cartoon of the *Battle of Anghiari*.

So subtle is the modelling, so delicate the touch, so supreme the mastery of the gradation of tone and half-tone, that the work approaches very near to that high category where is the *Mona Lisa*.

It makes us cognizant, perhaps more fully than any other existing work, of his practice of modelling his figures preparatory to painting them. Cardinal Borromeo referred in 1625 to a clay model of the infant Christ as being still in existence, which he says Leonardo made in preparation for this cartoon.¹

So plastic is the result that it would seem as though the whole effect were of statuary, weather-beaten, and crumbling a little in token that time has taken it to itself, has, as it were, sowed lichen in the hollows and in the tiny interstices of the stone, and touched with riper loveliness the softly moulded arm and breast.

There is at Vienna in the possession of Count Esterhazy a cartoon 'apparently agreeing with the Louvre picture, but its authenticity is very doubtful in the opinion of those critics who have seen it.

There are, however, several authentic studies for parts of the Louvre composition. Two of these—the sheet of studies in red chalk for the infant Christ at Chantilly, and the black chalk study of the head of the Virgin,

¹ Gori, "Symbolae Decas." Secunda VII., 122, 123 (Marks).



Alinari photo]

[Uffizi Gallery, Florence

STUDIES OF HEADS

formerly in the Earl of Warwick's Collection, and now in that of Dr. Mond—suggest by their greater delicacy of treatment, that the Louvre picture, while not indeed entirely finished, is also in part in execution the work of a pupil—this being especially the case as regards the head and arms of the Christ, the modelling of which is distinctly the inferior of the studies of firmer, more responsive touch at Chantilly.

A study of drapery for the lower half of the dress of the Virgin, in the Louvre, has been worked on by a later hand, but the rhythm of the folds may serve to show how the picture, which is in this part least completed, would have progressed. Also connected with it are several studies of drapery at Windsor, among them being one for the right arm of the Virgin, in which the light gauze drapery encircles the arm like rings of wreathing smoke.¹

A drawing of a head in black chalk at Windsor² may be a study for S. Anne. The head-dress, the pose, the expression of the smiling mouth, the deep lozenge of the upper eyelid with its resultant effect of dreaminess, all serve to connect it with the Louvre composition.

The background of the picture is the sunniest of his landscapes; hills like fleecy clouds, and to the right the dark ridges of the ash are like bars across the light.

In this, in the head of S. Anne, in the bending figure of the Virgin, his art still reveals its full maturity.

But, as a whole, in effect the composition suffers somewhat by the precision of its structure. The positions seem chosen as incidental to a mathematical diagram,

¹ It is reproduced in the "Jahrbuch," XX.; M.-W., Bei. V.

² Braun, 223.

to the representation of which the creative artistic purpose is subsidiary.

S. Anne, as the apex of the triangle, dominates and dwarfs the rest. As an ageless sibyl she looks down upon the Virgin and Child who seem by contrast the creatures of a day. There is some inevitable loss of dignity in the representation of a full-grown woman seated in the lap of another. So he has made her a mother playing with her child, and it is S. Anne who Atlas-like supports the whole, in whose face he has attempted to portray the mystery of these things.

Of the origin of a picture of *S. John the Baptist* records are slight. It was apparently not a commission.

Of the early biographers only the writer of the "Book of Billi" and the "Anonimo Fiorentino" mention it—adding nothing to the bare statement.

A *S. John the Baptist as a Youth* was one of the pictures seen by the Cardinal of Aragon at Amboise in October, 1517.

There are sufficient versions of the composition of the Louvre picture and variants of it, to presuppose a common source. It is directly connected with Leonardo by the existence of a sketch in black chalk of the thumb and raised forefinger of the right hand, the rest of the hand being faintly drawn in outline, on a sheet containing mathematical notes and diagrams and two sketches of animals.¹

But the question of the authenticity of the Louvre picture rests almost entirely upon the evidence of the picture itself. Neither Morelli nor Mr. Berenson include it in the list of Leonardo's works. I can do but scant

¹ C. A., 179 r.



Neurdein photo

[The Louvre

S. JOHN THE BAPTIST

justice to the faith that is within me; but I believe it to be an authentic and characteristic work.

The modelling of the hand and forearm has a quality which it is impossible to connect with the work of any pupil. As supple, as soft, as delicate as is the treatment of the nude, either of Luini, Sodoma or Gianpietrino, it has a firmness and virility far in excess of their attainment.

The position of the figure seen in relief against a dark background seems as though chosen to afford the painter an opportunity of displaying to the full his profound knowledge of chiaroscuro.

Indeed, in the last years of his life his intermittent practice of art was mainly as the vehicle of the expression of his interest in its underlying scientific principles. This perhaps in part accounts for the comparative lack of preparatory drawings for the later works.

The *S. John* was prepared for, through as tentative stages as any other, but these found their place in the treatise on "light and shade."

The half-length figure, nude save for the girdle of camel's hair, peering out of the gloom, is certainly the most luminous, and in a sense the most mystic of his works. The light streams full upon the oval of the brow, touches and transmutes to gold the auburn tresses, points the fine oval of the face, and rounds with exquisite gradation the shoulder, forearm, and the uplifted hand. The eyes and subtly smiling mouth are in shadow. So plastic is the figure that the flesh seems to recede from contact with the light with suggestion of soft curve of outline that imperceptibly grows one with the impalpable shadow.

The type of face might be of either sex. It has a strong resemblance to the S. Anne in the pronounced oval, the high cheek bones, the long aquiline nose, the arched quivering mouth and mysterious smile, and the arrangement of the shadow. Entirely Leonardesque in conception is the attitude of the hand, recalling a like motive in the Academy Cartoon and in the *Last Supper*.

The body seems to be swaying, and with exquisite art the poise of the head balances the lifted hand.

It would serve to represent the figure of a Maenad in revelry rather than of the Baptist, were it not for the cross of reed! And the cross is in deep shadow, and lightly forgotten amid the wayward suggestions of the smile.

On the same sheet of manuscript as the sketch for the right hand is a sketch apparently for the automatic lion which, according to Vasari, Leonardo made when the King of France came to Milan. Lomazzo says King Francis I., but the occasion was more probably that of the triumphal entry of Louis XII. in July, 1509. We may infer the drawing for the right hand to be of approximately similar date, but some time may have elapsed before the execution of the picture. Presumably it was that seen by the Cardinal of Aragon in 1517.

There is no evidence of when it passed into the Royal Collection.

Both Cassiano del Pozzo (1625) and Père Dan (1642) include among the pictures by Leonardo at Fontainebleau a *S. John in the Desert*.

That this picture is not the Louvre *S. John* but the *Bacchus*, which certainly cannot be regarded as a work of Leonardo's, is evident from the text of Cassiano del

Pozzo's description: "La figura minor un 3° del vero, e opera dilicatissima ma non piace molto, perche non rende punto di devotione ne ha decoro, o verisimilitudine e assiso a sedere, vi si vede sasso e verdura di paese con aria."¹

Père Dan gives no description, but it is only reasonable to interpret the *S. John in the Desert* in the two categories as having reference to the same picture.

Moreover, the *S. John* in all probability had already gone to England at the time of Père Dan's visit. It was sent by Louis XIII. to Charles I. in exchange for a portrait of Erasmus by Holbein and a *Holy Family* by Titian. Its sojourn in England was of brief duration. It came under the hammer with the major part of Charles I.'s collection of pictures, was bought by the French banker Jabach for £140, and was presented by him to Louis XIV.

¹ Vatican. MSS. Barberini LX. 64. f. 193 a. (I am indebted for the quotation to the kindness of Mr. G. McNeil Rushforth, late Director of the British School of Rome.)

CATALOGUE OF THE PICTURES

BRITISH ISLES

LONDON.—BURLINGTON HOUSE (DIPLOMA GALLERY).

THE VIRGIN AND CHILD, WITH S. ANNE AND S. JOHN.
Cartoon in chalk.

LONDON.—NATIONAL GALLERY.

THE VIRGIN, THE INFANT CHRIST, S. JOHN AND AN ANGEL
("The Madonna of the Rocks"). Painted on panel with
arched top. 6 ft. $\frac{1}{2}$ in. \times 3 ft. $9\frac{1}{2}$ in. (No. 1093.)

FRANCE

PARIS.—THE LOUVRE.

THE ANNUNCIATION. Panel. M. 0.14 \times 0.59. (No. 1265.)

THE VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS. Panel with arched top. M.
1.99 \times 1.11. (No. 1599.)

LA GIOCONDA (portrait of Madonna Lisa del Giocondo).
Panel. M. 0.77 \times 0.53. (No. 1601.)

THE VIRGIN AND CHILD WITH S. ANNE. Panel. M. 1.70 \times
1.29. (No. 1598.)

S. JOHN THE BAPTIST. M. 0.69 \times 0.57. (No. 1597.)

ITALY

FLORENCE.—UFFIZI.

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI. Panel. M. 2.30 × 2.30.
Cartoon in ground colouring.

MILAN.—S. MARIA DELLE GRAZIE (REFECTORY).

THE LAST SUPPER. Wall-painting.

ROME.—VATICAN GALLERY.

S. JEROME. Panel. Executed in ground colouring only.

THE DRAWINGS

CONSIDERATIONS of space forbid any attempt to detail Leonardo's drawings.

For a critical catalogue of those relating to his work as an artist I would refer to Mr. Berenson's book on "The Drawings of the Florentine Painters."

The largest collection by far is that in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle, a hundred drawings from which have been reproduced among the Grosvenor Gallery publications, and others have been photographed by Braun.

Next in importance are the collections of the Louvre, the British Museum, the Uffizi, the Venice Academy and the Royal Library at Turin. Those at Turin, which include the only indisputable portrait of Leonardo by himself, have been reproduced by Signor Pietro Carlevaris. The others have been photographed by Braun, and in the case of those in the Uffizi and at Venice, also by Alinari and Brogi, and Alinari and Anderson respectively. There are also drawings at Oxford, in the Library of Christ Church (reproduced among the publications of the Grosvenor Gallery), and in the University Galleries, at Buda-Pesth (Braun), in the collection of M. Bonnat at Paris (Braun), at Chantilly (Braun), at Cologne, and in London at Dorchester House, and in the collection of Dr. Mond.

Many others are to be found in his manuscripts, unconnected with the text, and associated with his work as an artist.

THE MANUSCRIPTS

THE manuscripts are:

The Codice Atlantico, in the Ambrosiana at Milan, published by the Accademia dei Lincei, Rome, 1894. In progress.

The MSS. of the Library of the Institut de France, including two from the Ashburnham Collection, edited by C. Ravaisson-Mollien. In 6 vols. Paris, 1880-1891.

The MS. in the Library of Prince Trivulzio, Milan, edited by L. Beltrami. Milan, 1892.

Treatise on the Flight of Birds. Piumati and Sabachnikoff. Paris, 1893.

Treatise on Painting, reconstituted from MSS. Best edition. H. Ludwig, Vienna, 1882.

The MSS. of the Royal Library at Windsor. Dell' Anatomia. Fogli A. Piumati and Sabachnikoff, introd. Mathias Duval. Paris, 1898. Fogli B. Turin, 1901. In progress.

(Facsimiles of the Windsor MSS. without transliteration have been issued by Rouveyre, of Paris, in 22 vols. 1901.)

Three volumes of MSS. in the Forster Collection at South Kensington. (Facsimiles of these have been issued by Rouveyre.)

The MS. in the British Museum (Arundel 263).

Treatise on the Nature, Weight and Motion of Water, in the Library of the Earl of Leicester, Holkham Hall, Norfolk.

The last two are as yet unpublished.

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